

# October 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/](https://www.results.org/skills_center/results_national_conference_calls/).

## Introduction – Dr. Joanne Carter, Executive Director of RESULTS (Washington, DC)

Welcome everyone to the RESULTS October 2014 National conference call focusing on tackling US Poverty issues

Just a reminder that you can download the PPT slides for today's call in the Take Action box in the top right-hand corner of the RESULTS Homepage

We're less than 4 weeks out from the November elections and our focus this month is outreach to get face-to-face meetings with Congressional candidates (both sitting members of Congress running for re-election and new candidates) to put the issue of poverty in America and critical solutions like the EITC, the CTC and asset development in front of them. To raise these issues at a time when candidates are accessible and need to listen. To help build relationships that will carry over into the new Congress. And to shape their priorities for that new Congress—or at least raise their awareness of these issues and their awareness of you as advocates and as resources on these issues.

I want to acknowledge you for the amazing work you've done already and the success you've had this year in meeting face-to-face with members of Congress:

You've had at least 107 FTF meetings (that we know of) with members of Congress in 2014

That's a third more than you had all of last year and that's with 3 months left in the year, and it's the most face-to-face meetings for U.S. poverty volunteers in a decade.

So build on this critical work this month—I know it only comes with huge persistence and dedication and creativity and not taking no for an answer.

On today's call:

Meredith Dodson will provide a legislative update—including why raising these issues of the latest census data on poverty and the role of the EITC and CTC in reducing poverty is so important now.

You'll hear from an inspiring and powerful guest speaker: Sister Marge Clark of NETWORK who has decades of experience advocating on behalf of social justice issues and reducing inequality.

You'll have a chance to get some great tips and ideas on organizing outreach to candidates and do some strategizing together

We'll have a Roll Call on your candidate outreach this month and announcements.

**Our 2015 RESULTS conference in Washington DC is July 18-22. So please mark your calendars—we want to see all of you there!**

Thanks for everything you do. Push for those meetings now with candidates. Voting is really important but what you bring that's much rarer is the willingness to shape the priorities of whoever is elected and to engage ongoingly with members and staff so that poverty in this country and the solutions to poverty and inequality are on their agendas in a powerful way.

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

Our work mirrors RESULTS overall strategy: work with legislators, media, and others in our community.

- Legislative Overview, [October Action](#)
  - Election Season = opportunity to get poverty issues in the conversation, build momentum for tax policies

that prioritize creating economic mobility

- Short-term: when Congress passes tax legislation during the “Lame Duck” session after the election
- Long-term: when policymakers move forward on larger tax changes next year
- Reminder: 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
- Could see deep threats to variety of safety net programs in next Congress
  - Reconciliation possibility if Rs win Senate (threats to EITC, CTC, SNAP)
  - Also opportunity to build on bipartisan momentum to expand EITC – supported by both President Obama and Rep. Paul Ryan
- Acknowledge frustrations of lack of editorial success in September
  - More challenging than we expected – election season, starting relationships now
  - But the work you’ve done helps build relationships, in it for long haul. Love this quote from Elli Sparks, a volunteer in Richmond with the [Citizens Climate Lobby](#). For those who aren’t familiar with CCL, they are an organization that works on climate change using the RESULTS grassroots model. Here is Elli’s take on working with editorial writers (from <http://www.tikkun.org/tikkundaily/2013/09/11/working-to-heal-repair-and-transform-citizens-so-they-heal-the-world/>):

*...Our director Mark Reynolds likes to say, ‘We’re betting the farm on relationships. Then he tells us that we need to build relationships with members of Congress and editorial writers. Most of us CCL volunteers have never done that before!! What in the world does a relationship with a member of Congress look like? How do we connect with an editorial page editor? Some of us have found models for those relationships in other parts of our lives. Gary in Boston uses the model of a work relationship....*

*My relationship model is different. I adore romantic relationships, so I use romance as my model. That first meeting with the editorial writer... it’s like a blind date, only you’ve decided beforehand you are going to marry this fellow. You are going to be sweet and interesting, but not too intense.... if it doesn’t work out with the editor, you are going to marry one of his friends at the newspaper – the business editor, environmental writer, or city editor. Someone at this paper will find you interesting and compelling – it’s just a matter of being persistent until you find the right connection.*

*...I see the editorial page writer as a painter. His canvas is the editorial pages. His pallet is filled with letters to the editor, op-eds, and editorials. I am his muse, model, and assistant....I want him to fill his canvas with colors that I like, so I’ll have my group send 3 – 5 letters to the editor whenever the opportunity arises. The more colors I put on his pallet, the better chance of having him pick one or two of my favorite colors.*

- Hope this idea of building a relationship helps put some of our work in perspective.
- Still 84 media pieces this year
- Opportunities to circle back with editorial writers:
  - 10/16 Census releases Supplemental Poverty Measure
- When the Lame Duck Congress returns – will be our November focus

## Guest Speaker: Marge Clark, NETWORK (Washington, DC)

### Introduction

- Sister Marge Clark works as a lobbyist on domestic human needs at [NETWORK](#), a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
- One of the “Nuns on the Bus”
- Member of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM)
- Has worked to raise awareness of the wealth gap in America through NETWORK’s [Mind the Gap!](#), [Mend the Gap!](#), and [We the Taxpayers](#) campaigns
- Over thirty years’ experience in higher education, teaching teachers
- Also did elementary school teaching
- Actively engaged in work to close the School of the Americas and in her Congregation’s work with the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility.
- Marge: **Really value work of RESULTS.**

### Questions for Marge from Meredith:

1. **Briefly tell us about the work NETWORK does and the current “Nuns on the Bus” tour. What did you hear from voters?**
  - a. Sometimes people put off by “Catholic” – by Catholic social justice teaching
    - But membership/following broad, majority not Catholic
    - Engage “the 100%”
    - Create greater economic activity
    - Since our beginning 42 years ago
    - Work with all kinds of people on inequality and what can be done
  - b. Nuns on the Bus – current tour focused on getting out the vote
    - Really believe that all 100% need to be active in our democracy
    - All candidates using excessive amounts of outside money
    - Drowns out voice of everyday people
    - Need both the right to free speech AND right to be heard!
    - Voting = way to be heard
    - Started in Iowa, wound down in NC last week, then Louisiana and Georgia next week and then Denver (without the actual bus), KY, WV, MI; 10 states altogether
  - c. Iowa:
    - started in Des Moines with great 1<sup>st</sup> event at Capitol, RESULTS’ Jos Linn was there.
    - VP Joe Biden was there and right on target, same messaging
    - He really wanted to ride on the bus, made secret service nervous – they checked it out and drove it night before
    - After the rally, Biden came on and secret service
    - Went unannounced to lunch at small restaurant, talked for 1.5 hours
    - Wrote his name at the top of the list at restaurant
    - In Des Moines and Davenport: knocked on people’s doors
    - What I heard most: frustration about big money, some then turned it into energy and others

depressed into non-action

- I'd engage with them, talk to them about minimum wage – big issue in Iowa Senate election
- All willing in the end to sign card that committed to sign vote, and they were excited that we'd send card back to them
- They complained that polling places would be changed at last minute – I suspect voter suppression given the neighborhoods
- Council Bluffs, Sioux City, Waterloo, Dubuque: town halls and some site visits, trying to lift up organizations and companies doing good things, good labor practices, helping communities
- At town halls, people worked in small groups: what are your concerns? What needs to be done next?
- Tracked suggestions from events and brought to the next event
- Cedar Rapids site visit: working with women coming out of prison, immigration. Helping them regain sense of own power

**2. In your experience as a lobbyist and someone trying to engage everyday people in the advocacy process, what benefits do you see in meeting with candidates before they take office to talk about poverty issues?**

- a. Terribly important, and realizing that most candidates and Members of Congress don't know much about poverty around them
  - They are in a bubble, don't know what it's like outside of that
  - Many of them don't realize legal and legislative things that have made it worse, especially that increase the wealth gap
  - Important to hear from district and states – and that they will follow them, go to town halls (and call on them to have on town halls – some don't event)
  - Let them know will hold feet to fire, hold accountable
- b. Many will say "leave this to the churches"
  - Don't realize that much of the work of charities actually distributing government resources – ex. Mercy utilizing government housing/homelessness foods, food banks using commodity and other nutrition programs
  - Don't see those connections
  - Need to be educated about these programs in own district – public/private partnerships
- c. Being a lobbyist is like my history in education
  - Teaching new ways of looking at things

**3. We also know NETWORK has been working to raise awareness of the wealth gap in America. Can you tell us about your [Mind the Gap!](#), [Mend the Gap!](#), and [We the Taxpayers](#) campaigns, and how can we use tax policy to deal with the wealth gap?**

- a. All of these programs available free on our site, go to education programs, have list we've developed
  - Mind the Gap: people don't realize how much the wealth gap has widened, how divided people are
    - Includes interactive tools, videos
    - Specific activities: help people grasp change in wealth gap over last 10-20 years because of changes over past 20 years
      - Ex. People stand in groupings based on wealth gap – see how people are moving apart, only 1-2 people at the high end, everyone else at other end.
    - Mend the Gap:
      - specific changes, including asset building, housing, how tax policy has changed – much has been driven to support large corporations (not small businesses) and wealthy individuals (supporting those who get money from investments instead of working income)

- We the Taxpayers: new teaching guide, DVD. Starts with who pays taxes and who doesn't - -- some corporations

Questions from Grassroots:

1. **Paul Hoffinger (Minneapolis): thank you to Marge. I went to a network event and found the “what’s next?” question very inspiring. Former state legislator at my table and found too much duplicity of those in government, had different feel after the Nuns on the Bus event. Meeting with GOP Rep on Monday and inspired by the conversation.**
  - a. Marge: had many state legislators at the town halls. Ex. Dubuque, my hometown – gave any legislators opportunity to say what they heard
2. **Kitty Sherlock (Santa Fe): what is an example of what you can do to address wealth gap?**
  - a. Marge: check out asset building materials. Ex. Don't get engaged in short-term loans, avoid debt trap. Includes suggestions of how to get help if ready to begin homeownership. People need suggestions of what programs to use. Whole range of asset building.

Good luck!

Marge: each state's events include nuns from that state, plus Sister Simone, so very fun!

## October Action Overview and Training – Jos Linn, RESULTS Grassroots Manager for U.S. Poverty Campaigns

The [October Action](#) is focused on meeting with congressional candidates or their staff before the election. This action offers you the chance to build relationships with potentially new members of Congress and solidify them with incumbents. Unfortunately, poverty is almost non-existent as an election issue so this gives you the chance to make poverty a part of the conversation, as well as educate candidates on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and Financial Security Credit.

When reaching out to campaigns, ask to meet with candidates in-person, if at all possible. Also ask about public events you can attend where you can talk to the candidates. If you cannot get a face-to-face meeting, ask to meet with policy staff. Remember that many times campaign staff end up becoming congressional aides if their bosses win.

To help you, here are the things you can do to make your action a success this month:

- **Organize.** Assign a candidate to each person in your group. That person set up the meeting and do research about the candidate's position on the issues. You can find candidate information on the [Election page](#) of the RESULTS website.
- **Set up a Lobby Prep call.** Once you have a meeting scheduled or plan to attend a town hall, contact Meredith Dodson of RESULTS ([dodson@results.org](mailto:dodson@results.org)) to set up a call with your group to get ready for the meeting. She will provide you individualized coaching on the candidate and how best to talk to him/her about our issues.
- **Do your homework.** Use Google and candidate websites to find out their positions on poverty, taxes, and the wealth gap. You can find candidate websites and other information on the [RESULTS Election page](#). For current members of Congress, find contact information and voting records on our [Elected Officials page](#).
- **Research the issues.** Go to our [Issues pages](#) to refresh your memory about the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC), [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC), and [Financial Security Credit](#). Also, go to <http://talkpoverty.org/poverty> to find new poverty data for your state and congressional district (right hand side of your state's data page). Find information about the benefits of the EITC and CTC to your state using [data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#).
- **Draft a laser talk on the issues.** Use the [RESULTS EPIC Laser Talk](#) format to what you'll say about the issues you want to discuss. We'll do an exercise in a minute to help you draft a laser talk. You can also see our [2014 sample Laser Talks](#) on the EITC/CTC and FSC. You can also find [Sample Town Hall Questions](#) on the RESULTS website.
- **Gather your materials.** Print out our [Economic Mobility Lobby Meeting Request Sheet](#) to take to your

meeting and give to the candidate.

## Training Section

RESULTS EPIC Laser Talk is perfect way to organize your thoughts into a powerful request for candidates

**E = Engage.** Engage the listener into your conversation with a short story or fact or value statement.

**P = Problem.** Specifically identify the problem you want solved.

**I = Inform or Illustrate.** Inform the listener about the solution to the problem and/or share a story that shows what success can look like.

**C = Call to Action.** Make a specific, targeted request of the listener in the form of a YES or NO question.

Now let's draft a Laser Talk on the call today. We'll go through the Laser Talk format by asking you questions to elicit facts and stories to use in your talk.

### 1. Engage:

- a. According to the U.S. Census, how many Americans people were living in poverty in 2013?
  - i. 45.3 million or 14.5 percent
- b. What tax programs are lifting millions out of poverty each year?
  - i. The Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

Example: The Census just reported that over 45 million Americans were living in poverty in 2013. But if not for the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC) millions more would have been living in poverty.

*Take a minute to write down your ENGAGE statement*

### 2. Problem:

- a. What will happen to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit in 2017?
  - i. Long-overdue improvements enacted in 2009 will expire
- b. How many people will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty as a result?
  - i. 17 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into or deeper into poverty

Example: Unfortunately, the threat of poverty still looms large for millions of Americans. If improvements to the EITC and CTC are allowed to expire, 17 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty.

*Take a minute to write down your PROBLEM statement*

### 3. Inform/Illustrate:

- a. Do you have a story about how you or someone you know benefitted from the EITC and/or CTC?
  - i. Julie used the EITC/CTC to pay off medical debt, preschool fees for her daughter, college tuition, and to put into savings. (see story at: <http://halfinten.org/stories/julies-story-about-eitc/>)
- b. According to the U.S. Census, how many people did the EITC lift out of poverty in 2012?
  - i. 10.1 million, including 5.3 million children
- c. What do studies show about the benefits of the EITC to children whose families receive it?
  - i. Better health outcomes, better grades in school, higher earnings as adults

Example: In 2012, the EITC lifted 10.1 people out of poverty, including 5.3 million children. The EITC has been shown to encourage work and improve infant health. EITC children do better in school and earn more income as adults. Let's not cut supports that help working families and make such a difference. Instead, we must protect these tax credits by making the 2009 improvements permanent.

*Take a few minutes to write out your Inform/Illustrate statement*

### 4. Call to Action:

- a. *If you win in November, will you work with congressional tax leaders to protect and strengthen progressivity in the tax code by making expiring EITC and CTC improvements permanent?*

Take a few minutes to write out your Call to Action

### Sample Laser Talk

**Engage:** The Census just reported that over 45 million Americans were living in poverty in 2013. But if not for the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC) millions more would have been living in poverty.

**Problem:** Unfortunately, the threat of poverty still looms large for millions of Americans. If improvements to the EITC and CTC are allowed to expire, 17 million people, including 8 million children, will fall into poverty or deeper into poverty.

**Inform:** In 2012, the EITC lifted 10.1 people out of poverty, including 5.3 million children. The EITC has been shown to encourage work and improve infant health. EITC children do better in school and earn more income as adults. Let's not cut supports that help working families and make such a difference. Instead, we must protect these tax credits by making the 2009 improvements permanent.

**Call to Action:** If you win in November, will you work with congressional tax leaders to protect and strengthen progressivity in the tax code by making expiring EITC and CTC improvements permanent?

### Open Shares: People share their questions

#### Resources to help with laser talks:

- State and congressional district poverty: [www.talkpoverty.org/poverty](http://www.talkpoverty.org/poverty)
- 2013 U.S. Census Official Poverty Data: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/demo/p60-249.pdf>
- U.S. Census American Community Survey: <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t>
- State EITC/CTC data: <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4097>
- New info on expiring EITC and CTC improvements: <http://www.offthechartsblog.org/what-would-congress-inaction-cost-working-families-find-out/>
- U.S. Census Supplemental Poverty (2013 data comes out on 10/16/14): <http://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/methodology/supplemental/overview.html>

If you have questions or need coaching for your candidate meetings, please contact Jos Linn ([jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org)) or Meredith Dodson ([dodson@results.org](mailto:dodson@results.org)) for help. Good luck!

### Roll Call – Stella Linn, RESULTS Des Moines (Des Moines, IA)

Hi, this is Stella Linn from the RESULTS Des Moines group. I'm pleased to do this month's Roll Call. Here are the questions we want you to answer this month:

1. How many people are in the room?
2. How many candidates will you contact to meet with this month?

In a minute, the operator will begin calling your groups by city. When your city is called, simply answer the question like this "Our numbers are 7 and 6." Remember, the operator will unmute your phone when your city is called, so you don't need to do anything to your phone. Again, the questions are:

1. How many people are in the room?
2. How many candidates will you contact to meet with this month?

OK, operator. You can begin.

### Announcements – Alli Zuel, RESULTS Iowa Intern (Des Moines, IA)

Hi, this is Alli Zuel, I'm a senior at Central College in Pella, IA and I'm a new intern for RESULTS in Iowa. I'm going to close out today's call with our Announcements.

- If you live in an area with no RESULTS U.S. Poverty group, please join the next **RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents Calls** on Tuesday, October 21 at 1:00 pm and 9:00 pm ET. (857) 232-0476, passcode

703096.

- Also, introduce RESULTS to someone you know by inviting them to join the next **RESULTS Introductory Call** on Friday, October 31 at 1:00 pm ET. People can register at: [www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSMeetandGreet/](http://www.tinyurl.com/RESULTSMeetandGreet/).
- Remember that RESULTS cannot do the work we do without the financial resources to make it happen. Our staff, our website, conference calls, the International Conference, materials and all the other things we do to support you in your important work are possible only because we have the resources to pay for them. To help, for years you – RESULTS volunteers – have done fundraising to help. Be they big events or small, online campaigns or through the mail, your fundraising work has allowed us to continue to support you in creating the political will to end poverty. We ask each of you to consider doing a fundraiser this fall. We already have some great events coming up in Columbus, Santa Fe, Detroit, Houston, and Austin. If you'd like to host an event this fall, the RESULTS development team can help you plan a great event, no matter how big or small. Or if you prefer to reach out to Friends and Family online or through the mail, we have new online resources to help you, which you can see in the slide. Our Friends and Family campaign goal this year is \$25,000 and we're just about half way there. Please consider doing a fundraising event or participating in our Friends and Family campaign this fall so we can meet our goal and continue to support you in the great work you do! For more information about fundraising for RESULTS, please contact Jen DeFranco at [jdefranco@results.org](mailto:jdefranco@results.org).
- **Save the date!** The 2015 RESULTS International Conference will be held **July 18-21, 2015** in Washington, DC. We will be back on Capitol Hill next year at the Washington Court Hotel. We'll have more details and registration information in November.
- You can find these and other upcoming events, along with conference call numbers, on the [RESULTS Events Calendar](#).
- And remember - Election Day is November 4. **Please be sure to vote!**
- Thank you for being on the call today. The next RESULTS U.S. Poverty National Conference Call is **Saturday, November 8 at 12:30pm ET**.
- Finally, good luck with reaching out to candidates this month. You never know what might happen, as RESULTS REAL Changer Tamara Bates found out when she met former President Bill Clinton at an event recently. So operator, let's open up all the lines and wish each other good luck with our candidate outreach!