

Conference Call Summary

Introduction

Dr. Joanne Carter, Executive Director, RESULTS/RESULTS Educational Fund
(Washington, DC)

Welcome everyone to the RESULTS December 2014 call focused on Domestic Poverty Issues. Happy holiday. It's great to be with you to end the year together. This call is a celebration of what you've accomplished, what we've accomplished together. And it's also a call to action for your continued critical leadership on the issues we're fighting for. AND YOUR leadership in creating champions in Congress and turning opponents to allies.

A reminder that you can [download the slides](#) for today's call in the Take Action box in the top right-hand corner of the RESULTS Homepage

I want to start by acknowledging your remarkable work in 2014:

- Turn to SLIDE 3 and you'll see RESULTS volunteers have spoken face-to-face to at least 121 members of Congress, including 90 representatives and 31 senators. Along with hundreds of other meetings with staff. For perspective, that is nearly 40 more meetings than you had in 2013 and is a record for our U.S. poverty advocates. It's quite remarkable and there are many lobbying firms in DC that pay tens of millions to make that happen
- A few things to note; First and foremost just dogged persistence- that many meetings DO NOT happen without asking and asking again, and again. But you were really smart in using town halls as ways to reach members, especially in an election year. And our expansion into smaller states where it's somewhat easier to reach Senators has also really paid off BUT also really depended on folks in those states doing a great job of getting FTF meetings.
- If you look at SLIDE 4--Overall, we've generated at least 119 media pieces to support our US poverty campaign work, including 96 letters to the editor, 17 op-eds, and 6 articles and radio spots. Aside from the news articles covering EITC and CTC, you've generated most of the Letters on this issue.

I've heard just recently again from Senator Sherrod Brown how important your work on EITC and CTC is—and as you may know, Senator Brown led efforts to stop a bad tax bill just a few weeks back because it didn't include EITC and CTC. Even our champions need our support and partnership.

I also want to share that David Beckmann, the head of BFW, has personally reached out to me to say how critical it will be for RESULTS to play a leadership role in protecting SNAP in 2015 (if or more likely when it is in danger of being cut). And he even said he thinks we can and should be the leading edge of the fight to protect SNAP because of the bold and effective role we have played. I want you to know that because it is such a clear recognition of the value and importance you brought to the SNAP effort.

So congratulations on what we you have accomplished and it is very clear how much we are needed and the need to build on this and keep it up!!

If you go got the next slide—you see Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa with our Iowa volunteers and Jos Linn. I was listening to National Public radio this morning [retiring Senators] and thinking of some of the incredible leaders in Congress that we are losing—like Senator Tom Harkin such a powerful voice on ending hunger in America, on worker rights, Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, Rep George Miller of CA a champion on education, and the needs of working people, low-income children. It's so sad to see these champions go—those retiring but others having lost. But it comes back to the even greater importance of our role going forward helping create new leaders on the issue of ending poverty in America and also bolstering the champions we do have in Congress so that they can be even bolder and more successful. We're in a unique position to talk with our allies in Congress about how they can be even stronger leaders on these issues and actually be part of the legacy of ending poverty and hunger in this country. I think we can do more to push and support our allies to be bolder. And I was struck again in a FTF meeting with a relatively new Republican member of Congress this past week that folks come to Congress wanting to do something that matters, leave a legacy—often they forget that in the day to day and in many cases we might not agree on a lot. And certainly few people ever ask them about it. But I think we can tap into that.

I'd end by flagging a few big opportunities we can take advantage of now and into the early new year:

January and February are GREAT times to get FTF with members of Congress and set them up right on our priorities for 2015 on creating economic mobility, protecting and expanding the EITC and CTC, supporting more fair tax policies and additional ways to support asset development.

I also want to announce that our February 2015 conference call will be a joint call with NY Times columnist and author Nick Kristof--author of A Path Appears that includes RESULTS: including in "Six Steps You can Take in the Next Six Minutes". He's written extensively not only on solutions to global poverty but also on the critical role of ECE of HS, and about poverty and the need to address racial inequality in America. This will be a great outreach opportunity.

And please mark your calendars for July 18-21 for the RESULTS conference in Washington DC—it's our 35th anniversary but more importantly it is a critical year to protect and expand efforts to end poverty in America so we want to see you all in DC and to work with you to find ways to make it to the conference and overcome whatever barriers you might have to getting there.

Finally thank you for your financial generosity in supporting RESULTS through our annual end of year giving appeal and the amazing fundraisers that many of you have organized.

Grassroots Shares – RESULTS Successes in 2014

Jos Linn, Grassroots Manager, U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Des Moines, IA)

Welcome everyone! As Joanne demonstrated, a slow legislative agenda because of the election did not stop all of you from having another great year of grassroots advocacy. It is your drive, determination, and passion that make this work inspiring and worthwhile. So let's take a few minutes and hear about some of the success you achieved in 2014.

Daria Flores, San Diego, CA

Let's first hear from Daria Flores in San Diego. San Diego had several face-to-face meetings this year. However, as Daria will explain, doing the meeting is only the first step. Without follow-up afterward, you won't get the results you want.

If you have ever gotten the Congressional runaround, you can identify with my story. But at least this one--spoiler alert--has a happy ending.

It started when four of us met with Representative Susan Davis the end of August. Susan is a liberal democrat who usually supports our issues and we meet with her every year to thank her for her past support and update her on what we are up to for the current year.

We thought our request would be a no-brainer. She already had signed on to co-sponsor CTC, and we asked her to now co-sponsor the EITC legislation. While she sounded quite positive about it, she said wanted her staffer to check out the details before she agreed to the action. The staffer would get back to us in a next few weeks. Well, he never did.

And there was no response to my follow-up email.

Normally it would have stopped there, but at the end of October our group arranged for RESULTS to be one of the co-sponsors of an event. It was a movie and panel discussion on what it was like for struggling families raising children in America. And it just so happened that Susan Davis was part of the panel.

During the question/answer session, I asked her if she could comment on how the CTC could help young children. For some reason she didn't mention CTC, and talked briefly about EITC.

This was a great lead-in, so after the panel discussion, my partner, Michele, and I went up to her before she left and asked her why nobody got back to us regarding EITC co-sponsorship. Susan seemed genuinely surprised and said a different staffer (one who was present at the event) would check into it right away and get back to me.

Then the run-around started again with me being bounced to the DC office and again getting no response.

Annoyed, I decided to call the District staffer back only to be told he was no longer with the Congresswoman. I was so exasperated, I told the woman answering the phones how frustrated I was and then she said "Daria Flores"? I know you. She remembered me from Congressman Filner's office when she was a staffer there. I explained the situation to her in detail and she said she would look into it.

The very next day, Brandon, from the DC office called and said he would talk to Susan first thing when she arrived in DC the following morning. He seemed pretty confident she would co-sponsor and said he would let me know when she did.

And the beginning of November, he emailed me that Congresswoman Davis had co-sponsored. "Told you I would get it done!" his email read, and there was a happy face at the end.

We don't always have successes but, after more than two months and all that effort, we sure enjoyed this one.

Lydia Pendley, Santa Fe, NM

Now let's hear from Lydia Pendley in Santa Fe. Over the years, Santa Fe has grown into one of our strongest and most effective groups. One area of growth for them is fundraising. Originally, they were doing small events to raise money for RESULTS but over time have graduated to bigger and more lucrative events. Lydia will share with us about their success and why they fundraise for our work.

Thanks for the opportunity for our group to share about our fundraising. Just a short history and then a few ideas about what has helped us get to this point.

Our group has been around since the early 1990's. Our first fundraiser, though, was not until 1998 – a Halloween party attended by about 30 people. The goal was to raise \$1,000. At the end of the party, we had only \$500. Kitty Sherlock, my co-leader, the next day was describing this sadly to a friend, who then handed her a check for the other \$500.

It took us 6 years to get it together to try another event – this time a luncheon, with Marshall Saunders from San Diego as our speaker (his daughter lived in SF). 35 people, and we think we remember that we raised about \$1500.

Well, another 6 years went by and we finally got up our courage and did two small brunches in 2010, one in the summer and one in the fall – about 40 people. Our draw for the first was that we served Belgian waffles cooked by the daughter of the founder of the Belgian waffle on the original waffle maker. This time we raised about \$5,000.

We had a really good time doing those and decided we could try for a bigger event the next year, instead of 6 years later. So started what is now becoming our signature event – a Harvest supper in November with home cooked soups, salad, bread and pies. 2011 we drew 70 and raised about \$11,000. 2013, 88, raising \$13,500. In 2013, we said, we can do this every year. This year's event was a little smaller in attendees, 76, but growing in the number of actual donors – 85, raising \$14, 800.

I want to say that we have really surprised ourselves over the last 4 years. We are a small group and the people we know and invite are not wealthy. What we think has made the difference for us is that first and foremost, that we know we are raising money for a critically important cause and a very effective organization. Second, we are having fun and really like working together on this. Third, we are keeping track each year now of whom we invite, who attends, and who gives. We are trying to build each year a larger base of people who know us, who like the food we serve, and who are getting to know our personal commitment to RESULTS and the good work that RESULTS does in the world. Inviting is the heart of it – a little scary at first, but the more you do it, the easier it gets. We had 11 of us inviting and reached around 300 people. The more we do it in person and the more we follow-up from initial e-mail or mailed invitations, the better our success. Also, because people are getting to know us and begin to have their own history of giving to RESULTS, pre- and post- event donations from people who

cannot attend are increasing. And a fourth point - we are emphasizing becoming monthly donors and are having success with increasing those numbers.

Our whole group now wants to give you a last word from our learnings over the years: JUST DO IT.

Sharvonne Williams, Indianapolis, IN

Now we turn to Sharvonne Williams. Sharvonne is a member of the new Indianapolis group. She attended last summer's International Conference in Washington, DC. She has also worked to connect RESULTS with the local Circles group in Indianapolis. Sharvonne is going to share about how these local partnerships can make a difference.

- I am currently a RESULTS partner in Indianapolis
- I attended the RESULTS International Conference in 2013, which is where I heard about Circles and got connected to them through Carlos Gujardo, a Circles leader from Ohio who spoke at the conference
- I went back to Indy and got connected to the Circles Indy group and even went to work with them as an Americorps volunteer
- I worked to help partner RESULTS and Circles locally in Indianapolis
- In 2014, we were able to bring three Circles Indy members to the RESULTS International Conference. The conference gave them a chance to share their story (they didn't even know they have a story to share) with people at the conference and with their members of Congress.
- Since then, we've done several presentations about RESULTS and Circles here locally and with the help of Myrdin Thompson, we've been able to start a new RESULTS group in Indianapolis
- Recently, we had an aide from Sen/ Donnelly's office come to a local Circles meeting to learn about what we do, build relationships with us, and hear about our issues
- We are now working on doing "storytelling" trainings with our Circles leaders.

Sarah Miller, St. Louis, MO

Finally, we'll go to Sarah Miller in St. Louis. Sarah is one of our REAL Change Fellows this year who has taken what she learned from the Fellowship and used it to help rebuild the St. Louis group and engage many others in her community in our work. She is a prime example of how REAL Change is helping create a new generation of powerful and inspiring advocates. My name is Sarah Miller. I'm a 6th grade school teacher and a member of the RESULTS St. Louis group. I am also part of the REAL Change Fellowship.

Last summer, I came to DC for the RESULTS conference as part of REAL Change, where I got training and then lobbied my members of Congress. I was totally inspired by my fellow REAL Changers and their energy and dedication! I took what I learned from the REAL Change Conference back to St. Louis to rebuild the group here. First, I took Carly Pildis' community

mapping training to heart to find new allies. We hosted an outreach event to gather more members. Since then, we have been working on training the new members to become advocates and gain the confidence to publish media pieces in the newspaper. I've even taken on the role of Group Leader. Next year we hope to meet with our members of Congress and get more letters to the editor published. We just hosted our second outreach and raise awareness event last night where we showed the movie, "A Place at the Table". It's a powerful movie about hunger and poverty in America. Afterwards, we had people write their own letters to Congress about the issues raised in the film. I have also been using what I learned from REAL Change to teach my students about how change is made. I've been able to tell them how I have tried to make change myself and how the process is done.

I am really excited to attend another REAL Change retreat in March and bring that experience back to my students again. I value the webinars that Carly puts on to help support us REAL Changers. It helps me to stay passionate and excited, get additional support, and also know that I'm not alone in the challenges that I face. It's been a really great thing to be a REAL Change fellow with the support of people around my age and extra training sessions. If you're in your twenty's like me, I hope you will take advantage of the REAL Change Fellowship and apply to be a member of next year's class. Trust me, it's worth it.

Legislative Update and December Action

Meredith Dodson, Director of U.S. Poverty Campaigns (Washington, DC; calling from Ypsilanti, MI)

- Right before Thanksgiving, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH-8) negotiated a deal on ["tax extenders" legislation](#).
 - Expanded and made permanent some business tax credits permanent while extending others for a year.
 - Cost = **\$400 billion** over the next ten years, none of it paid for.
- The President quickly threatened to veto the bill because it gave huge tax breaks to corporations while doing nothing for working families getting the EITC and CTC.
- Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) spoke out against the bill for its failure to include the EITC and CTC improvements. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA-12) lined up House Democrats to sustain the president's potential veto.
- Veto threat and House Democrats willing to sustain it killed the bill.
- Congress now working to pass a one-year extension (through 2014) of the extenders.

TAKE ACTION: If you haven't already, we urge you to call the tax aides in your House and Senate offices, expressing your frustration with what almost happened and reiterating your support of the EITC and CTC. Their bosses need to know that people back home are not happy that low-income families are again being ignored. Send a clear message to Congress that when they come back next year, your representatives and senators should oppose any tax bill that fails to permanently extend the 2009 EITC and CTC improvements.

Each group should designate one person to call an aide. You can find the names of tax aides under the Staff tab on our [Elected Officials page](#). The [December Action](#) has talking points and background information to help you with your calls and be sure to share [the new county EITC data from Brookings](#) when speaking to them. If you have questions about the action or your calls, please contact Meredith Dodson (dodson@results.org) or Jos Linn (jlinn@results.org).

Additional Action for Groups and Action Networks: For those in your group not calling an aide, take a few minutes to reinforce our message by [sending an e-mail](#) to your members of Congress about protecting the EITC and CTC. For your Action Networks, simply copy and paste this blurb into an e-mail and send it to them this week:

Last month Congressional leaders tried to push forward a [tax package](#) that would have made a number of business tax credits permanent while leaving low-income families in the cold. This deal fell apart, but it was a reminder that we have to keep the pressure on members of Congress to protect Americans struggling in poverty. Join me using the [RESULTS online alert](#) to tell Congress to make protecting low-income working families who get the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC) a priority.

Overview of 2015 U.S. Poverty Campaigns and Grassroots Goals

Meredith Dodson and Jos Linn

2014 U.S. Poverty Campaigns Review

Creating Economic Mobility – Building Ladders out of Poverty

This was designed as a multi-year campaign. Our goal through the campaign is to enact policies that ensure that all Americans have the financial means to earn enough income to make ends meet, stay on their feet while working to become financially independent, and build the savings and assets to weather financial emergencies and save for the future.

1. **Protect and expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit**
 - Make the 2009 EITC and CTC improvements permanent
 - Expand the EITC for workers without children in the home
2. **Support Asset Building strategies like the Financial Security Credit**
3. **Address the cliff effect.** Ultimately, the policy landscape (i.e. the difficulties of crafting legislation across programs and agencies to address various cliffs) and political landscape (i.e. the real danger that discussing work disincentives created by the cliff could justify draconian cuts or structural changes to the programs) have made us step back from a serious push to address the cliff effect through legislation in 2014.

Going Forward, What Does the Tax Extenders Episode Tell Us?

1. **Expect to be busy.** With the new Congress, expect more attempts to roll back the safety net. The EITC and SNAP will likely be big targets for cuts in FY2016 budget negotiations.
2. **We can assume nothing.** Rumors are that without the presidential veto threat, the tax extenders bill would have easily passed. Many traditional allies would have voted yes.
3. **House members are very important.** With any new attacks on anti-poverty programs, the only backstop is the President's veto pen and members of Congress, especially House Democrats, willing to sustain a presidential veto.
3. **Your voice is essential.** Your work becomes more important than ever. Educating your representatives and senators about the importance of anti-poverty programs will be vital if we are to stave off these attacks.

2015 U.S. Poverty Campaigns Proposal

Subject to board approval, we plan to pursue two major campaigns

1. **Continue our multi-year Economic Mobility campaign.** Given what's at stake with efforts to make corporate tax breaks permanent while ignoring low-income families, we'll continue our focus on protecting and expanding the EITC and CTC but in a broader framework:
 - Step back and look at inequality and the racial wealth gap (slides 20-21)
 - Government policies play a key role – and, tax policy is key
 - Historically, many government policies have fostered inequality
 - Slavery
 - Homestead Act
 - GI Bill
 - Homeownership policies: direct and indirect
 - Current system rewards wealth, widens the wealth gap further (slide 22)
 - We need to speak up for fairness, and specific tax policies that create fairness and accelerate economic mobility
 - Will have to be aware of pushback on several fronts on the EITC/CTC, most notably the EITC error rate and the link between the tax credits and immigration policy
2. **Food For Thought: Protecting Nutrition Programs.** Primarily focused on protecting the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP, formerly food stamps), also possibly WIC and other programs in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization.
 - Deep threats to SNAP in budget process, especially “reconciliation”
 - Congress could also once again cut SNAP funding as a way to pay for Child Nutrition Reauthorization, as it did in 2010.

2015 Grassroots Goals

2014 Achievements (to date)	2015 Goals
35 U.S. Poverty groups with 240 activists Represent 30 states and 118 House districts	43 U.S. Poverty groups with 275 activists Represent 40 states and 160 House districts (add 11 new groups and 130 new activists)
121 Face-to Face Meetings (90 House members, 31 Senators)	127 Face-to-Face meetings (92 House members, 35 Senators)
119 Media Pieces Published (0 editorials, 17 op-eds, 96 LTEs, 6 “other”)	129 Media Pieces Published (6 editorials, 20 op-eds, 95 LTEs, 8 “other”)
37 existing U.S. Poverty volunteers attended the International Conference, representing 67 percent of our groups	50 existing U.S. Poverty volunteers attend the International Conference, representing 75 percent of our groups
89 outreach and/or fundraising events 27 percent of groups did fundraising	125 outreach and/or fundraising events At least 40 percent of groups fundraise

We look forward to working with you to make these goals into a reality in 2015!

Announcements

Kristy Martino, U.S. Poverty Organizer (Kittery Point, ME)

- Our next National Conference Call is **Saturday, January 10 at 12:30pm ET**. Remember that in January we will do Group Planning, and like last year, we will devote time on the January conference call to group planning. We'll have more details about the call after the holidays but before you leave today, plan where your group will meet on January 10 to listen to the call and do group planning. Schedule yourself plenty of time to finish your planning that day, if at all possible and urge everyone in your group to be there. If not, make sure those absent can share their 2015 planning ideas with your group leader before that call. We will have our 2015 Group Planning materials available on the [RESULTS Group Resources page](#) and more information about group planning in the coming weeks.
- Remember that the 2015 RESULTS International Conference is **July 18-21, 2015** in Washington, DC. Be sure to include attending the conference in your group plans next month. Registration for the conference will begin in January.
- This is the season of giving and we hope you will include RESULTS and/or RESULTS Educational Fund in your year-end giving plans. Your financial contribution makes possible all the work we do and allows us to support you in being the great advocates you are. And all donations made until the end of this year will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000. This gives you the chance to double your financial impact. Go to www.results.org/donate to make your donation today!
- Also, encourage people you know to get involved with RESULTS. Invite them to attend our final Intro Call of 2014 this **Friday, December 19 at 1:00 pm ET**. You can find a link to the [Intro Call registration form](#) on the RESULTS Homepage.
- Also, the RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents will be having their final support call of 2014 next week. The calls are this **Tuesday, December 16 at 1:00 pm and 9:00 pm ET**. The call-in number is (857) 232-0476, passcode 703096.
- We are excited to announce that our **February 2015 Conference Call guest will be [Nicholas Kristof](#)**, author and respected columnist for the *New York Times*. In his recent book, [A Path Appears](#), he highlights the work of RESULTS and has repeatedly urged people to get involved with our work. This will be a joint call with our global poverty volunteers and we will use this event as an opportunity to invite new people to get involved with RESULTS. We'll have more details for you after the holidays but for now, save the date – **Saturday, February 14 at 2:00pm ET**.
- You can find these events and others on our [RESULTS Events Calendar](#) on the RESULTS website.
- Finally, we hope all of you have a very wonderful holiday season and a very Happy New Year. Please note that all RESULTS offices will be closed December 25 through January 1; RESULTS U.S. Poverty staff will be on vacation from December 20 through January 4.

Happy Holidays!