

# National Webinar Summary

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## Experts on Poverty Story

Yolanda Gordon, RESULTS South Carolina volunteer

*My name is Yolanda Gordon and I am one of the RESULTS Experts on Poverty. I live in Fort Mill, SC with my 3 children, Terran, TJ, and Libby. I have been working with RESULTS the last few years and understand the importance of anti-poverty programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. I have been the recipient of both of these tax credits. These credits have been instrumental in helping sustain my family of four throughout the years in many different areas. Being the parent of three special needs children, I need all the money that I can get during the year to ensure that I can take care of them and meet all of their needs medically and emotionally without sustaining a blow financially. In the past, I've used that money to purchase therapeutic equipment, school supplies, shoes, and my son's ankle foot orthotics. The money that my family gets from these tax credits is my safety net and if they were to disappear, so would that safety net.*

*I am therefore very glad, both for myself and for all those other parents out there who rely on the EITC and CTC to make ends meet that they exist. The actions that I have taken with RESULTS to advocate to preserve the credits have been to contact the South Carolina members of Congress and explain to them the importance of those tax credits to families like mine and countless others in the State of South Carolina. I also had an op-ed published in a local newspaper, and I educated others about the importance of the EITC and the CTC to ensure that they had the facts and they understood that these credits are Pro-Work Tax Credits.*

*With that being said, I am proud that I stand with so many other great advocates in the work that we have done to push the ball to the goal line and that Washington agreed that the expiring EITC and CTC provisions needed to be made permanent. That is a huge victory for low income and working class families.*

Make sure you check out Yolanda's powerful letter to the editor from December at: <http://www.heraldonline.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article47920245.html> and her interview on TalkPoverty.org at: <http://talkpoverty.org/2016/01/07/south-carolinians-think-republican-poverty-summit/>.

## Welcome

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

Happy New Year!

- Webinar slides are available in the Take Action section of the RESULTS Home Page
- Group Planning is main focus of call today

- Walk through group planning on call in the hopes you get it done today and send in your plans this weekend; Jos will explain the process in a few minutes. If your group wants to do planning on your own today, Jos will let you know when you can sign off.
- Note, to give you time to finish, the call will run to 1:45pm ET today
- Celebrate EITC/CTC Victory!
  - In mid-December 2015, Congress made these crucial [Earned Income Tax Credit](#) (EITC) and [Child Tax Credit](#) (CTC) provisions permanent, ensuring an estimated 16 million Americans won't be forced into poverty or deeper into poverty.
  - Over the past two years, you had:
    - 225 meetings with members of Congress, educating them about what was at stake
    - Generated 145 print media pieces. As we noted last month, 2015 was a record-breaking year for media
  - Your work throughout this past two years, and the way you “doubled down” in the home stretch, was key!
  - What does this mean? Kids get new shoes that fit & coats for winter, catch up on rent, needed car repairs...
  - Open up lines for a “happy dance” celebrating this victory!
    - If you helped schedule or attended one of those lobby meetings, shout out, “I did it!”
    - If you submitted a media piece, worked to get one published (even if yours wasn't), or had generated media coverage, shout out, “I did it!”
- Update on 2016 Campaigns
  - As many of you know, we take on 1-2 key campaigns each year.
  - We did an initial presentation to our board but the board won't discuss them formally and approve our campaigns until later this month.
  - We may dive deeper into policies to address wealth inequality and the racial wealth gap
  - In addition, we'll engage in making sure poverty issues get attention during this important election year. This includes our role in the Vote to End Hunger campaign, but also more specific Congressional candidate engagement and get into more details on the dangers of block grants, importance of building on tax deal by expanding the EITC and CTC, etc. If you missed the previous Vote to End Hunger webinars on engaging candidates (what we call “Birddogging 101”), [sign up for the January 13 webinar](#).
  - We'll share more details on our February national webinar

## Announcements

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

- Storytelling Webinar with Experts on Poverty this Monday, January 11 at 8:30pm ET. To participate, login at <http://fuze.me/27440970> or dial in by phone at (201) 479-4595, Meeting ID: 27440970#.
- Get "[Between the World and Me](#)" by Ta-Nehisi Coates. As part of our work on the racial wealth gap, we will read this book and have a "book club" discussion in your groups about it in February.
- Learn How to Effectively Research Your Members of Congress. Join our popular "Researching Your Members of Congress" training to show you how to get helpful information on the background, voting record, and issue positions for your members of Congress. The training is this Tuesday, January 12 at 8:00 pm ET. To join online, <https://www.fuzemeeting.com/fuze/f2988286/31404402> or dial (201) 479-4595, Meeting ID 31404402#.
- Also, encourage people you know to get involved with RESULTS. Invite them to attend our next RESULTS Intro Call this Wednesday, January 13 at 9:00 pm ET. You can find a link to the [Intro Call registration form](#) on the RESULTS Homepage.
- The RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents will be meeting Tuesday, January 19 at 1:00 pm and 8:30 pm ET for their monthly support call. Login at <http://fuze.me/27491886> or by phone at (201) 479-4595, Meeting ID: 27491886. Contact Jos Linn ([jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org)) for details.
- Save the Date! The 2016 RESULTS International Conference is June 25-28, 2016 in Washington, DC. Registration will open soon.
- Our next U.S. Poverty National Webinar will be on Saturday, February 13 at 12:30 pm ET.
- Find these and other events in the [Events Calendar](#) on the RESULTS website.

## 2016 Group Planning

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

Group Planning is about success. As the old adage goes: a goal without a plan is only a wish. Goal setting is an important part of RESULTS' history and is a big factor in your advocacy and outreach successes over the years. Just look at 2015. In early 2015, you made an amazing media push to keep cuts from SNAP out of the budget and it worked. Then as Meredith noted, you spent the rest of the year pushing Congress to make the EITC and CTC provisions permanent, and it worked. After years of e-mailing, meeting, writing letters, generating media, and other actions, you got those provisions made permanent two years before everyone expected. In addition, you held dozens of outreach meetings, welcomed new volunteers into your groups, made new local allies, and raised tens of thousands of dollars for RESULTS. Your planning last January helped make that happen. That's why we do this every year and why we're spending most of today's call talking about it.

So let's get started. On today's call, we're going to go through the 2016 Group Planning process. The goal today is for you to finish today and send in your plans to me and your Regional Coordinator when you're done. So here's what you'll need for today's call.

- Hopefully each group member has complete the 2016 Individual Planning Sheet ([Word format](#) or [PDF format](#)) and brought it with them today.
- You should also have a copy of the Group Plan Summary ([Word format](#) or [PDF format](#)) to fill out by hand or on a computer today.
- It will also be helpful to have the Group Planning Guide ([Word format](#) or [PDF format](#)) especially if you don't do planning on the webinar today.
- You can see links to all these forms on slide 10 of the PPT.

Now one thing you may have noticed on page 2 of the Summary is short. We did that on purpose. Last fall, I learned that at least one RESULTS group prints off an agenda for their monthly meetings and with a one-page copy of their group plan to the back. That way, they can keep their goals fresh in their minds each time they meet. We thought that was a good idea so we made the planning page (page 2 of the Summary) only one page so you could do the same (and we encourage you to do so). If during your planning you have additional details you want to add to your plan that are not reflected on the Summary form, just write them down and share them with your Regional Coordinators.

So, now it's time to get started. But first, like last year, you have a choice. If your group wants to walk through the planning process with staff, just stay on the webinar and we'll get started in a minute. However, if you prefer to do your planning together at your own pace, feel free to leave the webinar and get started (or stay on and just mute the sound). Just log back in (we'll do questions at the end) or call Meredith at (202) 263-9108. She will be available to help you until 1:45pm ET. If you are signing off, thank you for calling in today, good planning to you all, and please make sure to send me your plans when you're done today. Send it to [jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org).

OK, for those of you on the call, let's jump right in. Note, if the pace is a little fast for you; just go through it and then come back to sections you didn't complete at the end. You should have your Group Plan Summary out and ready to begin. First off, again, you all had a great year last year! Congratulations on the successes you achieved, which you can see on slide 12. To set the stage for another successful year, let's take a few minutes to reflect on the success your group achieved in 2015. Celebrate and congratulate each other for your accomplishments.

Now on to 2016!

### **Group Members and Roles** (Front page of the Group Plan Summary)

- This page is pretty self-explanatory. We want to know who your group is, what district(s) you cover, and who is in it. Make sure to get everyone's name and contact info written on the form before you leave today. Most importantly, we want you to identify the roles for each person in the group. We encourage everyone in the group to take a leadership role. This lets each person take ownership of the group. At the very least, it is important that the group assigns a group leader or leaders, point persons for members of Congress (and please list the legislator's name), a media point person, and an action network manager.

You can see other roles you might want to fill on the Individual Planning Form. Hopefully, some of you already indicated roles you'd like to take on.

- Also, we also urge you to designate a contact person so people who visit our website can find you. We recommend you create a generic group e-mail (e.g. [RESULTSDColumbus@gmail.com](mailto:RESULTSDColumbus@gmail.com)) so it can remain the same if your contact person changes.

Let's take about 7 minutes to assign roles out page 1 of the Summary.

### **Group Norms** (Page 2, section 1 of the Group Plan Summary)

This section is new this year but may be something you are already doing. Norms are good for groups that meet regularly as they set the tone for your meetings and interactions. I did this exercise at a retreat a few months ago and found it very helpful. Group Norms are simply the guidelines you want your group to operate under. Like a set of group rules. Examples can include the freedom to respectfully share and respond to ideas, having a welcoming atmosphere for existing and new volunteers, and having fun at meetings. They can also be more specific to RESULTS such as your group meet twice per month, your group will take action each month, each members will take on some kind of leadership role, and/or you'll do outreach to recruit new people on a regular basis. It's up to you what you want to write down and like I said, many of your norms will be things you are already doing. But the act of writing them down can be helpful in setting your intentions for the year and potentially help you identify new ones.

OK, let's take 6 minutes to fill out the Group Norms.

### **Group Sustainability and Health**

Now let's talk about specific goals for your group. It's obvious that RESULTS would not be RESULTS with you, the volunteers, and your local groups. So it's in our best interest to make sure we can support you as best we can. We can only do that by knowing what *you* plan to do to sustain and grow your groups. This section is all about that. Once we see your goals for each of these categories, we can better support you in reaching them.

- First we want you to set out your **meeting dates each month**. Again, we urge all of you to meet twice per month if at all possible – once for the National Webinar and the second time to take action.
- The next two are related. First, do you want to **grow your group** this year? We hope so. List down how many people you have now and how many you'd like to have by the end of the year. And how do you grow your group? Through **outreach**. We have a goal of groups doing outreach at least twice in 2016. We are committed to supporting you in doing that. So list out how many you'd like to do in 2016 and approximately when. Staff and your Regional Coordinators will then help you make them successful. In fact, stay tuned for details of a National Outreach Webinar we'll be doing in March.
- Next is the **2016 RESULTS International Conference**, which is June 25-28 in Washington, DC. Last year we had our biggest conference yet and we hope to have an even bigger one this year. Our goal is at least 70 U.S. Poverty volunteers at the conference this year,

representing 75 percent of our U.S. Poverty groups. List the members of your group who plan to come or would like to come.

- **Fundraising** is another important part of this work and last year, you did a great job. We have new groups fundraising through events and online which have helped us come close to our end-of-year fundraising goal. That money helps us support in your advocacy work and every little bit helps. We urge you to plan to fundraise again this year. You don't have to figure out all the details right now; just let us know your fundraising goal, how you want to do it, and when you'd like to do it.
- Next is your **Local Action Network**. These are people whom you can call on take action at important times. They can be a big asset in your advocacy work (and also possible future volunteers). How many of those people do you have now and how many would you like to have at the end of the year.
- Finally, let's think about **Regional Conferences**. These are one or two-day conferences organized by volunteers themselves who live in the same geographic region. These conferences can include training and relationship-building. I have yet to attend a Regional Conference that was not a fun and uplifting experience. They are especially beneficial to people who cannot attend the International Conference in DC. We hope you will seriously consider attending or even planning a Regional Conference and note that in your form; staff will help with planning and usually at least one staffperson attends.

Now take about 10 minutes to fill out the Group Sustainability and Growth section.

### **Working with Members of Congress and Congressional Candidates**

You'll notice that the Members of Congress section is a little shorter this year. As Meredith noted, we're still finalizing our 2016 Campaigns and it's a little hard to strategize on how to move them on an issue when the issues are not clear yet. However, what you can do is assign point persons for all your members of Congress and key Congressional candidates, and make your first meeting request.

This being an election year, you hopefully will have more opportunities to meet with your members of Congress and congressional candidates. And it's never too early to start. Please list the date by when your group's point people will submit meeting requests.

- House recess: January 14-24, February 13-21. Senate recess: February 13-21.

Don't worry. Once you get a meeting scheduled, we'll coach you on the specific issues to discuss. Just make sure to contact Meredith ([dodson@results.org](mailto:dodson@results.org)) as soon as you get your meeting scheduled. See the [January 2016 U.S. Poverty Action](#) for tips on scheduling face-to-face meetings.

So let's take about 5 minutes to fill out the Members of Congress Section of the Group Plan Summary.

### **Working with Media**

Finally, let's look at media. Last year was a banner year for media on our U.S. Poverty issues. You had 190 media pieces published, our highest total in a decade. That media success helped

[keep SNAP cuts out of the budget](#) and [helped get permanent extensions of the EITC and CTC provisions](#). Let's keep it up in 2016. Being an election year, your media work can help influence lawmakers and voters alike on issues affecting low-income Americans. The form is easy – list out how many letters, op-ed, editorials, and other media you want to get published this year. Remember to be bold; if you've never done an op-ed or editorial, set that as a goal this year. Be sure to also list the outlets you want to target and any other media strategies you come up with. Let's take 6 minutes to complete the Media Section of the Group Plan Summary.

***Woo-hoo – you're done!***

## **Questions from Grassroots and Submitting Plans**

***Marty Karnopp in Aurora, CO:*** *Do we know when we'll know the 2016 campaigns and if making a face-to-face meeting request, what should we say we plan to talk about?*

***Meredith:*** *We hope to have the campaigns finalized by the end of January and certainly by the February recess (Feb 13-21). For now, you can tell offices that you want to build on the recent tax deal in December and using tax policy to address wealth inequality. You can keep it vague for now but tell them we definitely want to build on the tax deal and address inequality. We'll have more detailed policy asks in the coming weeks.*

Thank you for going through this process. We know that for some of you, this is tedious. But there is power in it. Your success over the years is proof positive that it works. Please know we are grateful for you going through this process. Give yourselves a very big pat on the back for a job well done. We look forward to reading the great things you have planned for 2016!

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](mailto: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. If for some reason – flood, earthquake, Star Wars marathon – you cannot finish it today, please don't leave today without setting a time for your group to finish your plan. We'd like to have all plans in no later than January 31, but ideally most of them submitted this weekend (hint, hint!).

So now let's take a breather, as you contemplate a great 2015 and look forward to an exciting 2016. And as we leave today, unmute your line and let's wish each other a very Happy New Year!