

National Meeting Summary

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http://www.results.org/skills_center/results_national_conference_calls/

Experts on Poverty Share

Andy Trujillo, RESULTS Albuquerque

(For full story, listen to the recording at:
https://www.fuzemeeting.com/replay_meeting/68c3a948/7866670)

The way I realized I was in poverty was my shoes. After the New Year, I had holes in my shoes and people would make fun of me. I realized I was different from other people.

We used food stamps but it was never enough. At the end of the month, we'd have to pick spinach, which grows on the side of the road. We cooked it with pinto beans, which was a pretty good meal.

My brother and I one day were playing in a tree and found some eggs which we brought home and my grandma cooked them. After that, she would then send us out again to gather eggs to cook; I assume they were pigeon eggs.

Later in life, my mom came back and worked hard. At Christmas time we would get a promise as a gift. My mom would promise that we would get gifts in February. That's why I fight and defend the Earned Income Tax Credit because that was our Christmas.

Last year, I was invited to lunch by Dee Ivy (of RESULTS Albuquerque) and told me about RESULTS and what they fought for and it was everything I used as a kid, like SNAP and the EITC. The largest light went off in my head, telling me I needed to do something. This was my opportunity to give back. So now I've joined and committed to RESULTS. I think of that child without a voice or that single mother or grandmother raising children that were left in her lap and this is my opportunity to give back. I can make a difference and I can create change. I have a voice and I can use it for those who don't.

Welcome

Joanne Carter, Executive Director, RESULTS and RESULTS Educational Fund (calling from Abu Dhabi, UAE)

Welcome everyone to this month's RESULTS Domestic Anti-Poverty webinar.

I'd first like to welcome some new RESULTS groups to their first webinar. Welcome RESULTS Kansas City, Chicago, and Manhattan, KS. We're so glad to have you as part of the RESULTS family.

I wasn't able to be on the last two webinars so I want to personally congratulate you all on hugely important victory on making permanent the expansions of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. The CBPP estimates this is the biggest anti-poverty legislative victory in the last 20 years outside passage of the Affordable Care Act. I was at a CEO meeting at the

National Anti-Hunger conference two weeks ago and I was with Bob Greenstein head of CBPP and he acknowledged RESULTS and personally thanked me for the incredibly valuable role you all played in that success. (I also want to acknowledge several of our grassroots leaders who are Experts on Poverty for the excellent job they did at the National Anti-Hunger conference.)

We can use what we achieved on the EITC and CTC and the support and awareness we built, as a base for generating more momentum for policies that reduce poverty and increase economic mobility. Which is a great bridge to the next topic---

I want to take a few minutes to provide an overview of our 2016 U.S. Poverty Campaigns

At the start of 2014, RESULTS launched an overarching multi-year campaign focused on Creating Economic Mobility: Building Ladders out of Poverty. Our goal is to enact policies that:

- 1. Ensure that all Americans have the financial means to earn enough income to make ends meet,***
- 2. Stay on their feet while working to become financially independent, and***
- 3. Build the savings and assets to weather financial emergencies and save for the future.***

Last month, we had an in-person meeting of the RESULTS Board of Directors. First I just want to say that the board was extremely impressed the success you had in generating media and FTF meetings to achieve that outcome on behalf of the EITC.

The board approved our 2016 campaign proposal. This means we will continue to guild our multi-year Economic Mobility Campaign, focusing on Building Financial Stability and Combating Wealth Inequality. In evaluating our campaign strategies, we're going to put an particular emphasis on the drivers of the racial wealth gap as a root cause of poverty.

And while there may not be many opportunities to move policies this election year, the possibility of tax reform in 2017 offers really critical opportunities to enact asset-building policies and address wealth inequality; along with an expansion of the EITC. So we need to set the stage and build support for that.

As part of our Economic Mobility campaign, this month we'll build bipartisan momentum to expand the EITC for childless workers. By the time of the RESULTS International Conference (June 25-28), we'll include a second policy request that will focus on access to savings and wealth.

We will also have a second, more targeted campaign this year: Building Political Momentum to End Hunger and Poverty in a Crucial Election Year. We'll be engaging with current members of Congress, Senate hopefuls, and some House candidates to protect and strengthen nutrition programs, especially the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). This is absolutely essential because SNAP is so effective in combatting both hunger and poverty, and there are real threats to SNAP that could show up this year or in 2017.

Our agenda today includes:

- *A special guest--Patrick Hain of the Annie E. Casey Foundation—who will review their new work around the racial wealth gap and policies that can impact it. It's really valuable work that can help shape and inform our campaigns and national policies.*
- *Jos will give an overview of our Action this month*
- *And we'll hear shares from a number of you about the impressive work you're doing*

I want to end by really urging you to attend the RESULTS 2016 international conference. This is such a critical year for setting the stage for 2017. We need you in DC to help create the momentum for a new agenda to end hunger and poverty in this country and enact policies that create real progress to reduce wealth inequality. Our special speakers will include Barbara Ehrenreich, our powerful Experts on Poverty, key Senate leaders. We will have our REAL Change young leaders fellowship so please help us identify young leaders to join us at this IC and for year-long leadership program. We've tried to keep the conference costs down and we are also raising some scholarship funds for those who want to attend the IC but are limited by the costs. We want you and need you with us in DC at the end of June because what we do this year will shape the trajectory of the next four years and the next decade.

Guest Speaker – Patrick Hain, Program Associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation

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

Bio of Patrick Hain

- Joined the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 2011
- Leads the Foundation's work on work and income supports
- Serves on the EITC Funders Network and Asset Funders Network Steering Committees
- Worked on AECF's new report Investing in Tomorrow: Helping Families Build Savings and Assets
- Prior to AECF, worked in Washington DC and Chicago, IL
- Focused on issues such as asset building, asset limits, and credit building
- Bachelor's degree from Eastern Michigan University
- Master's from Northwestern University

1. Tell us about the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the work you are doing around the issues of wealth inequality and the racial wealth gap?

- First of all, thank you for work to make working family credits permanent
- AECF focused on helping America's kids have a brighter future (more: <http://www.aecf.org/>), work focused on:
 - Get a job
 - Keep a job

- Move ahead
- Mantra: earn it, keep it, grow it
- Build and keep assets to manage family assets
 - Why do assets matter?
 - Alleviate stress that would impact families, ex. car repair
 - Can hinder children's development
 - Strong correlation with indicators of child well-being, academic performance, self-esteem
 - Reduce teen pregnancy
 - 40% of Americans don't have \$400 of emergency savings
- We have opportunity to build assets and savings
- Especially important because of changing demographics
 - Soon majority of children will be children of color
 - Key for next generation

2. You have a new report out about policies that can help reduce the racial wealth gap. What did your research demonstrate?

- Report: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/investing-in-tomorrow-helping-families-build-savings-and-assets/>, focuses on 4 federal policies and 3 state policies. Hope for legislation that could move through Congress but wanted to present options.
- Make MyRA more accessible. Allows workers without retirement account access via Treasury Bonds, Congress needs to make permanent.
 - more flexible, acts as a Roth Account so can remove for any emergencies, accessible for any American, need to make sure continues after this Administration
 - More on MyRA as an emergency savings vehicle from New America: <https://www.newamerica.org/asset-building/myra-goes-national/>.
- Expand HUD family self-sufficiency – housing choice vouchers – capture pay increases in escrow to help with down payment of home. Currently 7,000, could reach 3 million people – need uptake
- Raise asset limits – put in place now to put barrier for families. Ex. TANF if more than \$1,000 can't participate, forcing families to burn savings, Proposal: raise to \$12,000 (for family to live off of for 3months)
 - SNAP: on federal level some interest but not movement, but states leading the way (OH and VA eliminated, CO raising the limits). Data shows that making families spend down elongates how long they are struggling

- Children’s Savings – created when child born, seeded with federal funds, “baby bonds” allows program to grow over 18 years, compound interest and perhaps matching opportunities, plus additional savings.
 - Brandeis analysis: close racial wealth gap 20-80%, depending on amount of resources at beginning, continuation, and level of uptake.
 - Bipartisan interest in legislation, House bill introduced in November: http://cfed.org/blog/inclusiveeconomy/usaccounts_act_would_create_csas_for_all_kids/index.html.

3. Three Questions from RESULTS Volunteers in Salt Lake City, Columbus, and Detroit – answers embedded above.

- For local support making sure families can connect to resources, reach out to Community Action and other financial counselors.

March Action

Jos Linn, Grassroots Manager for U.S. Poverty Campaigns

While we continue to educate ourselves on the racial wealth gap in the coming months, which if we learned anything from our book club discussions last month will require patience and persistence over the long haul, legislatively we are maintaining our focus on expanding economic mobility through the tax code. We all know how brilliantly you all did last year in securing a permanent extension of the EITC and CTC improvements. Now we want to harness that victory into expanding tax code benefits to those who being left behind.

As you can see in slide 8, the EITC is a tremendous program for families with children. Yet workers without children in the home, which can include non-custodial parents and low-income parents with adult children, receive a dramatically smaller EITC, less than 10 percent of what larger families get. As a result, this group is the only group taxed into or deeper into poverty. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that this happens to 8 million people in the U.S. These are people who are working but instead of getting ahead, they are falling behind.

As experts on the importance of the EITC in promoting work and reducing poverty, you are in a unique position to help. That’s why this month, we are making a strong push to educate lawmakers about this issue.

Set up face-to-face meetings for this month

- House Recess: March 24 – April 11; Senate Recess: March 21 – April 1
- Meet with members of Congress to talk about building on last year’s EITC/CTC success by expanding the EITC for childless workers
- Please take a copy of our 2016 U.S. Poverty Economic Mobility Request: http://www.results.org/uploads/files/2016_RESULTS_Economic_Mobility_Congressional_Requests.pdf

- Once you get a meeting scheduled, please contact Meredith Dodson ASAP to set up a lobby prep call to get ready for your meeting
 - dodson@results.org, (202) 783-7100, x.116
- After your meeting, please fill out the RESULTS Lobby Report Form: www.tinyurl.com/RESLRF

Groups take a few minutes to talk with your group about the status of your House and Senate meeting requests

- Assign people to make meeting requests or follow-up on existing requests
- Sample request: http://capwiz.com/results/issues/alert/?alertid=7268106&MC_plugin=2201

March Action: Lay the groundwork for your face-to-face meetings by writing letters to your representatives and senators about expanding the EITC for childless workers.

1. Introduce yourself as someone who cares about economic mobility in America and as a RESULTS volunteer.
2. Remind them that the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) support workers in low-wage jobs and lifted 9.8 million Americans out of poverty.
3. Share your concern that 8 million low-wage workers without children workers are taxed into or deeper into poverty.
4. Mention that House Speaker Ryan and President Obama have proposed to expand the EITC for low-wage workers.
5. Share that the Treasury Department estimates the Ryan/Obama EITC proposal would benefit 13.5 million Americans, including 1.5 million non-custodial parents, lift 500,000 hardworking Americans out of poverty, and reduce the depth of poverty for another 10.1 million.
6. Ask your members of Congress to work with key leaders, particularly House Speaker Paul Ryan and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady and Ranking Member Sander Levin or Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch and Ranking Member Ron Wyden, to move tax legislation that expands the EITC for childless workers this year.

To find contact information for members of Congress, visit our Elected Officials page at: <http://capwiz.com/results/dbq/officials/>. For other advocacy tips, check out our Activist Toolkit at: http://www.results.org/skills_center/activist_toolkit/.

March Action Resources

- March Action: http://www.results.org/take_action/u.s._poverty_laser_talk_protecting_eitc_and_ctc/
- New CBPP paper on EITC for childless workers: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/childless-adults-are-lone-group-taxed-into-poverty>

- CBPP EITC State Fact Sheets: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/state-fact-sheets-the-earned-income-and-child-tax-credits>
- EITC e-mail Action you can send to your Local Action Networks: http://capwiz.com/results/issues/alert/?alertid=9823986&MC_plugin=2201
- Use election coverage to generate media about the EITC: http://capwiz.com/results/issues/alert/?alertid=59692501&MC_plugin=2201
- RESULTS Blogpost with the video of the EITC Awareness Day event in DC: http://www.results.org/blog/build_on_eitc_awareness_day_to_push_for_expanding_the_eitc/.

Grassroots Shares

Jos Linn

Welcome! let's first go to Kevin Pearson, group leader for the RESULTS Evansville group, who will share about his experience with the EITC.

Hello everyone, my name is Kevin Pearson and I am the group leader for the Evansville, Indiana chapter of RESULTS. Thank you Jos for allowing me to share my experience with the national audience today.

I am a single worker without children. And I am deeply in favor of having the EITC for childless workers increased.

Currently I work two part time jobs with a combined gross salary of less than \$20,000. One of the jobs is a seasonal position, so that I'm laid off about 4 months out of the year, which makes an already tight budget tighter.

I do receive the EITC when I file my federal return and because of the aforementioned lay off, my federal tax refund check is a much welcomed sight. Because of my single and childless status, I don't have many expenses other than basic living expenses, so that the EITC portion of my tax refund helps to pay the bills and any past due bills.

I wish that I could put some of my tax refund into a savings account or buy a car which would help me land a much better job, but the check isn't big enough to do anything like that.

Only if the EITC for a childless worker was increased or doubled to the level of a single parent would I then have the flexibility to accomplish such things.

So, I am heavily in favor of this increase, and as the group leader of RESULTS Evansville, I have a personal motivation to lobby the congressional representative in the district where I reside to talk to his colleagues on Capitol Hill about this matter.

Now let's hear from Dee Ivy of RESULTS Albuquerque who will share how persistence paid off with a face-to-face meeting with their member of Congress.

Two years ago I became acquainted w/ Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham's Dir. of Staffing when I called to make an appointment for our Lobby Day in D.C.. Mariana put me in touch w/the

scheduler in the Washington office, but stayed in the email loop. Her calendar was booked so we met w/staff on that lobby day.

Last year it was once again my assignment to get a face to face w/Rep. Lujan Grisham and her calendar was full so we first met w/Mariana here in NM. I made a direct request for the Rep. to co-sponsor the house bill for expansion of the EITC & CTC at that meeting and was assured the message would be conveyed.

After 4 months Rep. Grisham had not signed onto the bill, the RESULTS Int'l Conf. date was approaching so I called Mariana and said we were seeking a mtg. w/the Rep. while we were in Washington and would be asking her why she hadn't signed onto the bill. WALLA – 2 weeks later she co-signed!

A month ago I called Mariana Padilla again to request a meeting w/the Rep. while she was home. While Mariana is always responsive and polite - I sometimes think she dreads my calls or emails- she knows I'm not going away!

Mariana's email:

Hello Dee, I will work to get a meeting set up as soon as possible however the Congresswoman's schedule is pretty full for several weeks. I am looping in Stephanie Kean with our office who is available to meet with you in the interim if you are interested. Mariana

MY REPLY

Thanks so much Mariana. Let's try for that meeting with Rep. Lujan Grisham as we REALLY want to share some information with her as well as strategize about some VERY IMPORTANT STUFF! Hopefully we can meet Stephanie Kean at that meeting also.

Keep me abreast of how things are going.

Low and behold – two weeks later Stephanie called and said they had booked an appointment with the Rep. This was another great lesson for me on how PERSISTENCE CAN – SOMETIMES - PAY OFF!

Three of us met with the Rep. yesterday and after Andy did such a good job on explaining the need for and benefits of expanding the EITC to workers w/o children in the home – she has agreed to support this expansion.

Ed Plunckett presented information on the racial income gap and while she was somewhat familiar with some of this data – I felt she was really engaged as Ed reviewed some of the graphs he had brought for her.

I presented information on the Racial Wealth Gap and how devastating that is particularly for our state which is 61% minority.

I feel confident that our Rep. will keep her eyes and ears open for ways to address the critical issues that we discussed w/us. And I felt she was sincerely appreciative of the RESULTS efforts, as she said she was, to help educate and disseminate the dire situation of these racial income and wealth gaps in our nation.

Ginnie Vogts, RESULTS Columbus volunteer

Hello Everyone, I've been in RESULTS for about 17 years and initially didn't realize the importance of the International Conference. No one spoke to me directly about it and I just didn't make time in my schedule to go. After a few years I finally got around to it and a whole new world of RESULTS opened up to me. For one thing, I grasped the full scope of RESULTS which you cannot see simply from your group experience. Then there was the understanding of our international reach and standing in the world of advocacy and justice seekers. I was also exposed to our awesome global work which was less familiar to me. What RESULTS has accomplished both at home and abroad is truly astounding and seeing us all together lifting up our successes makes me appreciate both the model of advocacy and the individuals who are so dedicated.

Each year I seem to enjoy the International Conference more. I've gotten to know people from other cities whom I see year after year. I see the staff who we rely on so much and who have become good friends. The keynote speakers are always world class and the workshops are informative and stimulating. For instance, I am excited to see Barbara Ehrenreich speak at this year's Conference. She has such a deep understanding and passionate voice for those living in poverty. I know she's going to be inspiring to hear. And of course, Lobby Day is very exciting. No matter how many times I lobby, I'm always nervous in the beginning and confident by midday. We get many compliments even from staff and Members of Congress who don't always support our campaigns. They are always amazed that we are volunteers doing this on our own time and paying our way. I think my favorite was when a staffer said, "You sure don't look like paid lobbyists". We took that as a positive. But best of all is the coming together as a body to take our message that we have been building and refining to Capitol Hill.

Also, the infusion of young advocates through the Real Change Fellowship Program has added zest to the conference and to RESULTS overall. We are so glad to be able to share our knowledge with younger folks who are passionate and committed. Seeing the fresh new faces each year is an added bonus and I am thrilled that it has continued. If you know young people who'd like to participate, invite them to apply for this year's Fellowship.

So will you be joining me in DC this June 25-28 for the RESULTS International Conference? I've already registered. I hope you will too. Remember, if you register before April 30, the low early bird rate for RESULTS volunteers is only \$125. Just go to www.resultsconference.org and register today.

If you are on the fence please let me push you over and assure you that you won't regret it one bit. There are multiple reasons to come but the best one in my opinion is that you get to see how smart, diverse, effective, innovative and powerful RESULTS volunteers are. The International Conference completes the equation of the RESULTS experience. Once you've been to it a light goes on and you truly understand the value of the work we are doing together. Hope to see you in DC this summer.

Announcements

Jeff Brown, RESULTS Kansas City volunteer

Hi, my name is Jeff Brown and I am the co-group leader of the new RESULTS Kansas City group. I am pleased to close out the call today with a few important announcements.

- Remember to get those face-to-face meeting requests submitted. And remember that after any lobby meeting, please fill out our Lobby Report Form: www.tinyurl.com/RESLRF.
- RESULTS U.S. Poverty Free Agents Calls, March 15 at 1:00 pm and 8:00 pm ET. Join online at <http://fuze.me/32256018> or by phone at: (201) 479-4595, Meeting ID: 32256018#.
- RESULTS Introductory Call, Friday, March 25 at 1:00 pm ET. If you want to learn more about RESULTS, register for an upcoming Intro Call on the [RESULTS website](#).
- RESULTS Advocacy 101 Training, Thursday, March 31 at 2:00 pm ET. A great introduction for new people and review for seasoned advocates on the nuts and bolts of issue advocacy. To join, go to: <https://www.fuzemeeting.com/fuze/f2988286/31404402>. To join by phone, dial (201) 479-4595, meeting ID 31404402#.
- Don't forget to register for the 2016 RESULTS International Conference, June 25-28, 2016 in Washington, DC. Register now at www.resultsconference.org!
- Our next U.S. Poverty National Webinar will be Saturday, April 9 at 12:30pm ET.
- You can find these and other events on the [RESULTS Events Calendar](#).

Finally, with spring right around the corner, that means baseball season is almost here. Since our group's home team is the World Champion Kansas City Royals, let's unmute all our lines and wish each other a very happy start of baseball season!