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# Voices from the Field: The Need for Federal Leadership in Cutting Poverty and Promoting Economic Opportunity

Center for American Progress Action Fund



The Leadership Conference



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS



*Governor's Summit on Child Poverty and Economic Opportunity*

**Building Bright Futures:  
Advancing the  
Child Poverty Agenda**

# Executive Order #101

- Established a Task Force on Child Poverty to develop a 10-year plan to reduce child poverty by 50%
- Composed of DOE, DSCYF, DHSS, DSHA, DOL, Governor's Office, Family Court, OCA, MWUL, City of Wilmington, Kids Caucus, KIDS COUNT, State Chamber of Commerce, three (3) non-profits, UD and legislative appointees

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- Public Meetings & Outreach Work Group

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- Building Wealth and Assets
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In addition to the harmful consequences for children individually, high rates of families experiencing economic hardship exact a grave toll on the U.S. economy.

## Childhood Poverty's Annual Aggregate Costs

- Forgone Earnings: 1.3% of GDP
- Crime: 1.3% of GDP
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- Discuss and prioritize initial recommendations

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# Successes

- Children's Health Insurance Coverage
- Newborn Screenings
- TANF expansions
- Education reforms
- Predatory Loan Fees

# Challenges

- Economy! Fiscal Challenges!
- Momentum!
- Jobs needed
- Middle class struggles

**Children are 25%  
of Delaware's population  
but 100% of our future!**



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May 2010

- Our mission is to break the cycle of poverty by investing in children's futures
- The foundation supports nonprofit organizations, public policies and systemic solutions aimed at:
  - Nourishing children's bodies
  - Nurturing their minds
  - Building family economic security



- Focus: Hunger alleviation and promotion of food security
- Strategies include:
  - Invest in combination of direct service and systems change grants
  - Promote large scale solutions and approaches to ending hunger in Massachusetts
  - Demonstrate a wholesale impact on feeding families by exponentially increasing access to food stamps and other public benefits (freeing up more money to purchase food)
  - Support multiple approaches to increasing access to healthy foods for low-income families



- Grantees include:
  - [The Food Project](#)
    - a national model of engaging young people in personal and social change through sustainable agriculture
  - Boston Food Council
    - ensures access to healthy food and supports expansion of local food sources for residents and businesses in Boston and the region
  - [Child Nutrition Initiative](#)
    - A public education and advocacy campaign to bring attention to child nutrition issues and support the expansion and reauthorization of the 2010 Child Nutrition Act

- Focus: Promote early education and care
- Strategies include:
  - Invest in combination of direct service and systems change grants
  - Promote large scale solutions and approaches to providing access for low-income families to high quality child care and pre-school
  - Invest in wholesale strategies to increase cognitive development among children ages 0-3

- Grantees include:
  - [Thrive in Five](#)
    - a city-wide initiative to ensure every child in Boston is ready to learn by kindergarten
  - [Root Cause](#)
    - research and analysis by most effective [School Readiness programs](#)
  - [Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children](#)
    - Strengthening early education and care for children with the greatest need through research, policy development, communication, and advocacy

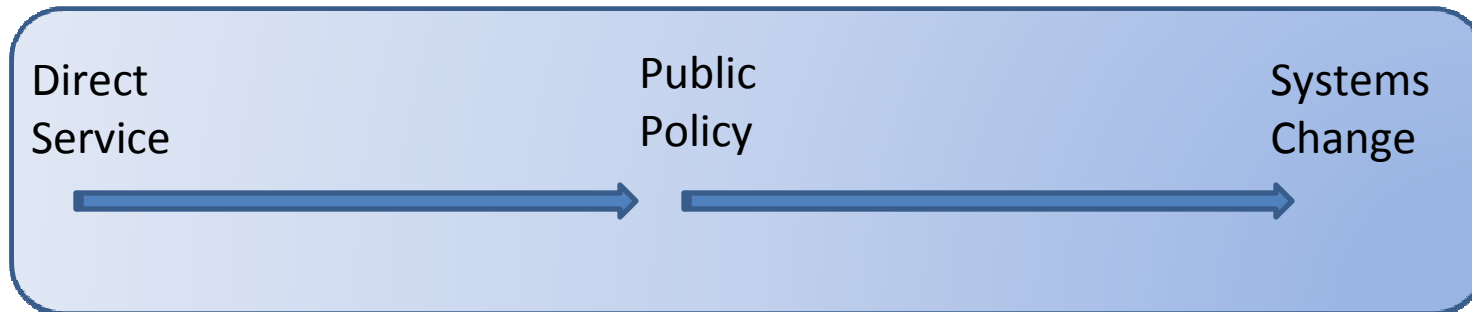


- Focus: Increase incomes for working families
- Strategies include:
  - Invest in combination of direct service and systems change grants
  - Promote large scale solutions and approaches to increasing the incomes (both cash and non-cash resources) for low-income working families in Massachusetts
  - Invest in solutions to market failures that assist low-income individuals to become financially self-sufficient and able to accumulate assets



- Grantees include:
  - [Center for Women and Enterprise](#)
    - a national leader among women’s business development agencies, dedicated to helping women start and grow their own businesses
  - [Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity](#)
    - a leading non-partisan forum on poverty in the US, known for presenting “big tent” ideas and solutions for reducing poverty and increasing economic opportunity

Eos' investments within these program areas are varied to achieve immediate and long-term impact



# Boston Rising

## A Fund to Fight Poverty

### **Dual goals:**

- Dramatically increase new philanthropy to fight poverty in Boston
- Invest in the most effective poverty fighting and educational strategies to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty

# Why fight poverty?

Poverty doesn't have natural advocates.

It's not a school you graduated from,  
or a disease your mother has.

If we don't champion the  
needs of the poor, no one will.

- Glenn Dubin, Co-Founder and Managing Member, Highbridge Capital Management  
Co-Founder and Board Member, Robin Hood

July 1, 2008

### **Boy, 7, shot as he played outside**

A 7-year-old boy playing kickball near his school was hit by a stray bullet last night...

(By Milton J. Valencia, Boston Globe)

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October 21, 2007

### **The heat or eat dilemma**

... research shows that while both rich and poor families increase their expenditures on home fuel during the winter, poor families offset this cost through decreasing food purchases, with an average 10 percent decrease in caloric intake.

(By Deborah A. Frank and Joseph P. Kennedy II)

April 1, 2008

### **Report cites low graduation rates in many city districts**

Suburban, rural students seen less likely to drop out

Boston ranked 24th among the 50 cities, with a graduation rate of 57 percent.

(By Ken Thomas, Associated Press)

# The Cold, Hard Truth

- The headlines reveal what most would rather ignore: we are failing our most vulnerable citizens
- There are over **105,000** people in Boston who live in **poverty**, and 30,000 of them are children
- **One out of every three children** in Boston lives in a family that **struggles to put food** on the table
- In Massachusetts, 82,000 **children are homeless** every night



# Children in Poverty

A child born into poverty in Boston faces bleak prospects

Is over five times more likely to raise her children in poverty than two-parent families are



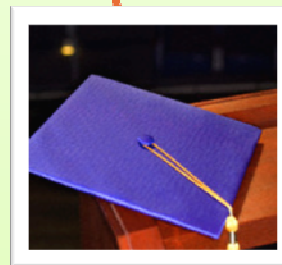
Will receive HALF their daily calories from meals at school



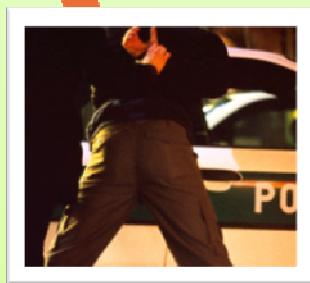
Has an 80% chance of having her first child as a single mother



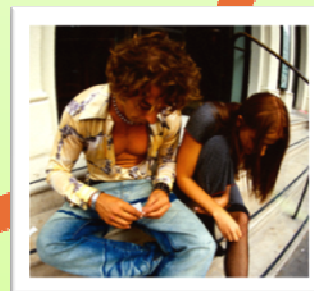
Has less than 57% chance of graduating high school in four years



Is likely to join the 90% of Boston youth who witness some form of violence very year



All too likely to join the other 8,000 youth age 16-24 who are neither working nor in school



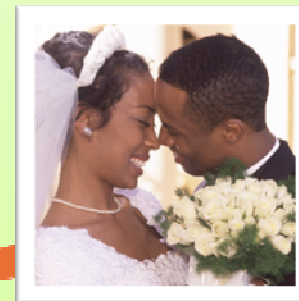
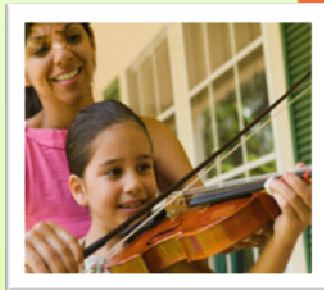
# Hidden Poverty

Poverty in MA is hidden by the state's relative wealth  
and financial and social capital



*Massachusetts has the **largest rich-poor gap** in quality of life for children of any state in the U.S.*

-- Annie E. Casey Foundation



## Poor childhood takes lifelong toll, study shows

April 29, 2010

By Alfred Lubrano, Inquirer Staff Writer

Sebastian burped and gurgled on his mother's lap Monday morning, three months into his Philadelphia life.

Because his family is poor, he's unlikely to get the food, housing and living conditions he'll need for his brain to develop properly over the next three years.

The circumstances of his just-begun journey could turn him into a bad student, an ineffective worker, and a poor man for the rest of his days, according to a new study.



- Our research tells us:
  - Poverty fighting agencies are not able to compete with major education, healthcare, and cultural institutions for six- and seven-figure gifts
  - Poverty in Massachusetts is greater than imagined
    - 1 in 3 children under age 3 coming into Boston Medical Center ER is food insecure (reporting limited availability of food in household)
    - 1 in 3 children in MA live at 250% of U.S. poverty line (\$53,000 for a family of 4, based on 2006 figures)
  - Annie E. Casey “*Kids Count*” study ranks MA last in the nation on overall well-being of low income children

- “Poverty” is at the core of our community’s challenges, but it’s not a word used in Boston today
- People want to donate to fight poverty, but their giving today doesn’t reflect this sincere motivation
- There are limited institutional structures in place to help people decide *which* poverty-fighting organizations will best use their donations



# A new model for effectively fighting poverty

## Defining Elements of Boston Rising

- **Fund to Fight Poverty**
  - 100% of funds raised are invested in poverty-fighting nonprofits
  - Board covers 100% operating and fundraising costs
- **Rigorous Evaluation Standards**
  - Evaluate programs, measure results, and refuse to settle for anything but the best
  - Focused on ROI from day one
- **Top-Tier Leadership**
  - Committed board and founders
  - Exceptional staff
- **Very Public Footprint**
  - Public outreach and multiple events that appeal to different donor audiences





# Boston Rising's Approach

Poverty is complex; it's a multi-obstacle condition with multiple hurdles one has to break through to get ahead. These obstacles exist across three complex and inter-related levels:

- Individual and Family level

- Poverty begins with a lack of financial resources to meet basic human needs, low levels of social connectedness, difficulty tapping into and utilizing high quality, relevant mainstream resources, and limited control and choice to improve the individual's or family's position.

- Community Level

- Impoverished communities are places marked by high concentrations of low-income people that endure across generations. They are also marked by a lack of opportunity to high quality, relevant, mainstream resources which hinders the ability of individuals to chart their own paths out of poverty.

- Systems and Institutions Level

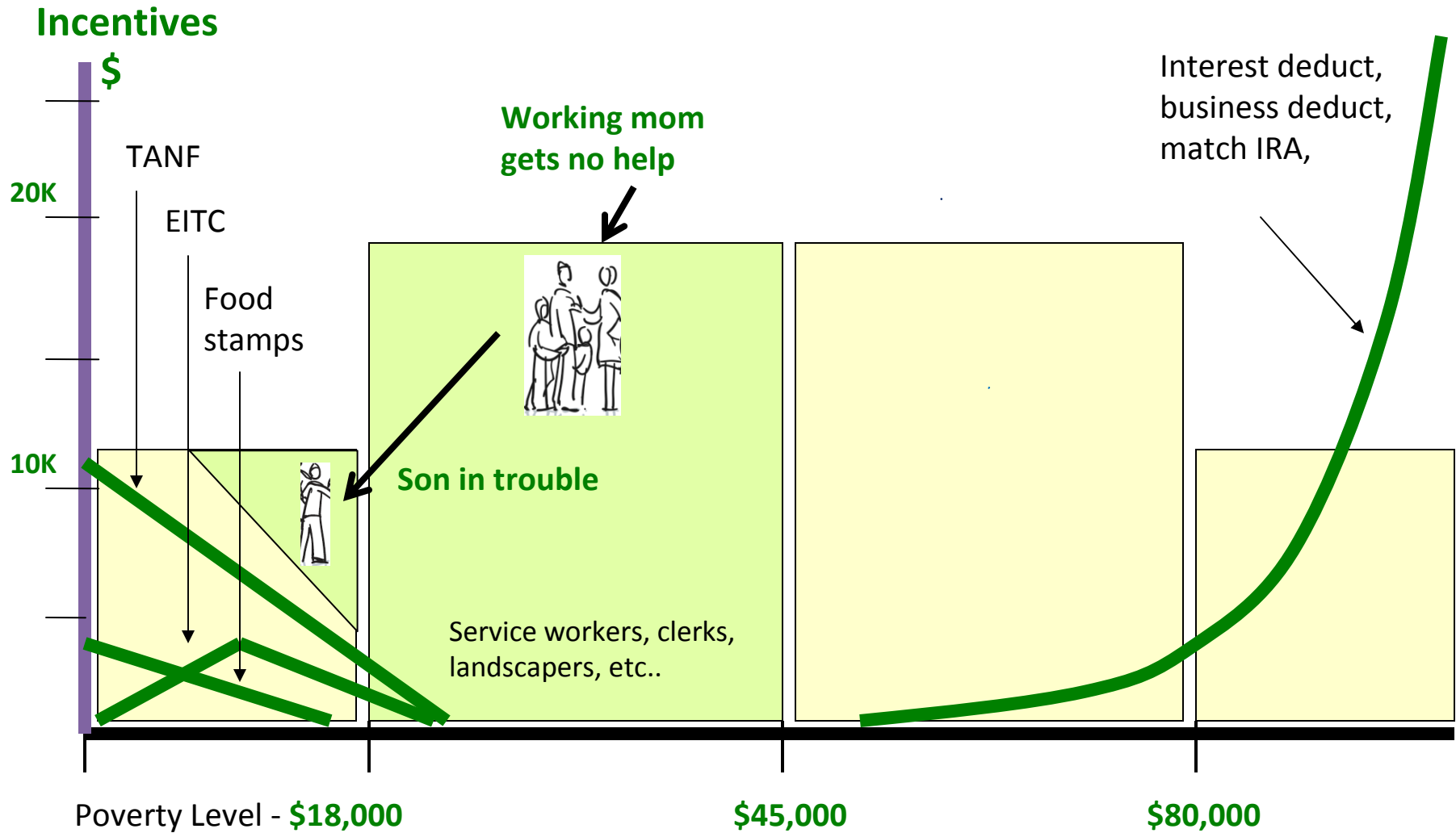
- Systems and institutions impact the previous two levels and collectively *are* the set of environmental conditions that influence (block or elevate) the lives of individuals and communities. Systemic issues evident today include but are not limited to: racism, economic crisis, government policies, and culture.

- Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCIs) are sponsored by government agencies and private funders
- CCIs seek a fundamental transformation of entire neighborhoods, not just one sector or aspect of a community
- Residents and local institutions are active participants; they help define the goals and activities of these initiatives

- Examples include:
  - Annie E. Casey Foundation’s *Making Connections* program in 10 sites across the country
  - California Endowment’s *Building Health Communities* program in 14 sites across California
  - Skillman Foundation’s *Good Neighborhoods* program in six Detroit-area neighborhoods
  - Federal government’s *Empowerment Zones* and *Enterprise Communities*

- Let's understand what the extent of poverty really is
- Let's "co-invest" with individuals and families, instead of "engaging"
- Let's incentivize families' moving out of poverty
- Let's do evaluations that actually tell us if we're making a difference

# Gap in support for working families as they emerge from poverty

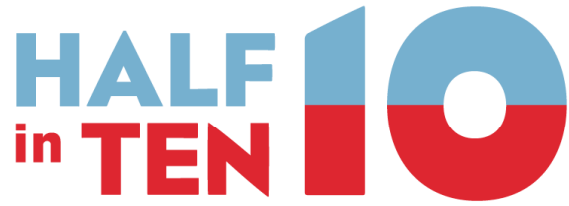


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