

The Anti-Poverty Network Of New Jersey

P.O. Box 1404
Edison, New Jersey 08818
www.antipovertynetwork.org



WHO WE ARE: The APN has been meeting since the Fall of 1999. Since that time, over 300 organizations have participated in Network events. The Network includes individuals and groups from a variety of NJ communities & organizations, including advocacy groups, neighborhood organizations, labor unions, businesses, faith-based organizations, and other community agencies and networks. Participants are encouraged to present issues and proposals that they would like other groups to critique, endorse or consider for joint action. In addition, APN has itself, through discussion and collaboration, undertaken efforts and developed proposals which represent the consensus of participants. We are united by our commitment to ending poverty in NJ.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ANTI-POVERTY NETWORK:

1. At the December 2008 Conference of the APN, Governor Jon Corzine heard from a panel of low-income people who shared the stories of the reality of poverty in their own lives. Governor Corzine made public mention of these stories in testimony before a U.S. Congressional Committee hearing, and also spoke about them in his January 2009 "State of the State" address.
2. Testimony from the APN was included in the final report of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Immigrant Issues, and APN leadership has been working with legislators in enacting recommendations from the panel.
3. APN joined with other coalitions in fighting to successfully remove proposed co-pays in Medicaid prescription drug coverage and we were also successful in advocating for the restoration of proposed cuts to New Jersey FamilyCare coverage for low-income parents.
4. Again working with partner organizations, APN worked to ensure that the State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP) was funded at the highest possible level, that grants to the state's emergency food program were maintained, and that expansion of the Food Stamp program moved forward with appropriate state support.
5. We have been especially active in working to restore funding for Legal Services of New Jersey, so that it can continue to provide full and complete legal representation to low-income people.
6. This year, the APN met with the Chair of the Assembly Budget and Appropriations Committee, Assemblyman Louis Greenwald and raised our concerns about cash assistance grants for people living in poverty. This has led to on-going conversations aimed at changing policy and increasing grant amounts.

THE NETWORK IS GUIDED BY A "BLUEPRINT TO REDUCE POVERTY" which is determined and periodically reviewed by Network members. This blueprint outlines specific areas of focus and strategy and helps the Network identify how and where its efforts are most needed and might be most effective. This blueprint identifies nine areas of priority advocacy:

- Ensuring decent affordable housing;
- Providing effective support for low-income workers and their families;
- Providing an effective safety net for all individuals and families;
- Ensuring comprehensive healthcare;
- Protecting low-income consumers;
- Ensuring effective implementation of state constitutional rights to a thorough and efficient education;
- Enacting comprehensive immigration reform;
- Reforming criminal justice policy; and
- Making communities with current concentrations or lower-income or vulnerable people viable places to live.

This blueprint can be found on the APN website.

AN ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON POVERTY is held each December, bringing together several hundred people to discuss specific issues related to Poverty in New Jersey. The conference is an opportunity to focus on issues and strategies that have been a part of the Network's action during the year. The conference also provides an opportunity for government and agency leadership to discuss public policy. Various State legislators, Commissioners and the Governor have attended and addressed the conference.

REGULAR GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE NETWORK are held, which include roundtable discussion, an educational or informational presentation, an overview of current legislation relating to poverty issues, an opportunity for networking, and announcements of upcoming events and activities of any organization that participates in the Network. Anyone is welcome to attend the monthly meetings. Meeting dates are posted on the web site.

THE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE is responsible for establishing the policies for the Network including the overall development, organization and direction. The Steering Committee sets the agenda for the general meetings, gathers information and identifies presenters for Network activities. Anyone may participate in the Steering Committee, but we ask that those interested in being part of the steering committee to make a commitment to be present at as many meetings as possible.

A VARIETY OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES AND TASK GROUPS ARE ORGANIZED FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES. This includes a committee to plan the Annual Conference and other groups that are short-term and focused on particular issues or events. Occasionally small groups are organized to meet with legislators or to interact with state departments and agencies. All of these special purpose groups are made up of volunteers from within the Network.

NETWORK STRUCTURE is flexible and participatory to encourage information sharing. It aims to include as many interested people as possible, centering attention on learning about concerns and strategies brought to the meetings by participants, with a special focus on those issues agreed to be of general concern. There are no fees or dues for participation in the Network. Contributions are solicited occasionally to support special events, such as the annual conference.