

## **WORKING FOR CHANGE: Advancing an Economic Mobility Agenda for Low-Wage Workers in Urban America**

The "Working for Change" forum is a monthly series of discussions with legislative staff, advocates and others to forge consensus on an economic mobility agenda. The goal of the series is to mobilize a core group of advocates, practitioners, philanthropists and public officials to act in concert to increase workers' wages and improve workplace benefits. The "Working for Change" forum is sponsored by CSS in collaboration with the Coalition on Human Needs and is being coordinated by Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs.

### **May 9, 2007**

The Community Service Society of New York (CSS), in collaboration with the Washington, D.C., based Coalition on Human Needs, kicked off the "Working for Change" forum series on Capitol Hill. The inaugural forum featured a presentation by David Jones, president and CEO of CSS, on the work of CSS in New York City and its relevance to urban communities across the nation. Joining Jones was Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs; Margy Waller, Director of The Mobility Agenda and CSS Senior Fellow; and Dr. William Spriggs, chairman of the Department of Economics at Howard University and CSS Senior Fellow, who also served as moderator.

### **June 15, 2007**

The focus of the "Working for Change" forum was a discussion on how to "frame" an economic mobility agenda for low-wage workers. The presenter was Margy Waller, Director of The Mobility Agenda and CSS Senior Fellow. Responding to Margy's presentation were Rev. Tony Lee, pastor of Community of Hope AME Church in Temple Hills, Maryland, and David Kusnet, Visiting Fellow at the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, DC. The session was moderated by Dr. William Spriggs.

### **July 20, 2007**

The focus of the "Working for Change" forum was a discussion on "Workforce Readiness as a Corporate Imperative." The presenter was Donna Klein, president and CEO, Corporate Voices for Working Families. Responding to Donna's presentation were Desmond Brown, Director of Health and Welfare Policy, Catholic Charities, USA, and Andy Van Kleunen, Executive Director, The Workforce Alliance. The session was moderated by Margy Waller, CSS Senior Fellow, and included Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs.

### **September 21, 2007**

The focus of the "Working for Change" Forum on September 21 was a discussion on Earned Income Tax Credit and child tax credit. The presenters for the Forum were Dr. Harry Holzer, Professor of Public Policy at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute and a Visiting Fellow at the Urban Institute, Veronica Nolan, Executive Director of the Urban Alliance Foundation, and Nick Gwyn, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Income Security & Family Support, Committee on Ways & Means. The session was moderated by Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs.

### **October 19, 2007**

The "Working for Change" Forum on October 19 focused on opportunities to support the training and employment of "disconnected youth" through transportation related projects. The featured speakers for the forum were former Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater and Sally Prouty, president and CEO of the Corps Network. CSS Senior Fellow Dr. William Spriggs served as moderator.

## November 9, 2007

The "Working for Change" Forum on November 9 focused on developing an agenda for America's youth. Returning to continue the discussion on youth was Sally Prouty, President and CEO of The Corps Network, Linda Harris, Director of Youth Policy, Center for Law and Social Policy, and Thaddeus Ferber, Program Director, the Forum for Youth Investment.

## December 7, 2007

Peer pressure, access to education, financial assistance, employment opportunities and the absence of role models are just some of the challenges facing disconnected youth in Washington, D.C. and across the country. The December "Working for Change" Forum featured four youth who face these obstacles every day. "The Disconnected Youth Experience: Voices of Young Adults," was the topic for the December forum, held on December 7, 2007.

## January 25, 2008

"The Talk on the Hill: A Stimulus Package -- Who Benefits," was the topic of the Working for Change Forum on Friday, January 25, 2008. This forum examined the prospects for an economic stimulus package and explored options to support low-income Americans. Panelists were Dean Baker, Co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Judith M. Conti, Federal Advocacy Coordinator for the National Employment Law Projects, and Christine Molnar, Vice President for Strategy, Policy and Advocacy at the Community Service Society of New York.

## February 22, 2008

"Who Are the Unemployed," was the topic of the February 22, 2008, Working for Change Forum in Washington, D.C. Ross Eisenbrey, Vice President of the Economic Policy Institute, presented "The Employment Picture," which took a critical look at unemployment from 2005 to 2008. Eisenbrey's report also looked at unemployment by industry and long-term unemployment and unemployment rates from January 2000 to January 2008. Eisenbrey was joined by Margy Waller CSS Senior Fellow and Director of the Mobility Agenda and our partner in the series, Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs.

## March 28, 2008

"What are the short and long term federal investments in states' capacity to train workers, support workforce development and generate jobs?" The March 2008 Working for Change Forum in Washington, D.C. examined the need for federal aid to states to spur economic activity and drive job creation. Presenters were Dr. Ronald Blackwell, Chief Economist, American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and Linda Bennett, Legislative Affairs Specialist, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The forum was facilitated by Margy Waller, CSS Senior Fellow and Director of the Mobility Agenda and Dr. William Spriggs, CSS Senior Fellow and chairman of the Department of Economics at Howard University.

## April 25, 2008

"Second Chance at Work Reentry and Workforce Opportunities," was the subject of the April Working for Change forum. Panelists and presenters were Fred Davie, President, Public Private Ventures (PPV), Dr. William Spriggs, CSS Senior Fellow and Chair of the Economics Department of Howard University, Dr. Wilson Goode, Director, The Amachi Program and former mayor of Philadelphia, Paul Keefe, Staff Attorney, Community Service Society of New York (CSS), Gabriel Torres-Rivera, Director of Reentry Initiatives at CSS, Helen Mitchell, Director of Strategic Planning & Policy Development for Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL), David R. Jones, President and CEO of CSS and Dr. James R. Lanier, Program Director, Re-Entry and Sanctions Center, District of Columbia Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency.

## May 16, 2008

"WHAT WILL IT TAKE? Moving Disconnected Youth Into The Workforce," was the topic of the May Working for Change forum. Panelists and presenters were Donna Klein, President and Founder of Corporate Voices for Working Families; Andy Chaves, National Workforce Effectiveness and Diversity Manager, Marriott International, Inc; Margy Waller, CSS Senior Fellow & Executive Director, The Mobility Agenda; David Paulsen, United States Human Resources Director, Accenture; Mala Thakur, Executive Director, National Youth Employment Coalition; David Jones, President & CEO, Community Service Society; Dr. Philip Jefferson, Professor of Economics, Swarthmore College; Clifford Johnson, Executive Director, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, National League of Cities; Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs; George Schutzer, Partner, Patton Boggs LLP.

## June 20, 2008

Would It Hurt to Provide a Little Help? "Extending Unemployment Insurance Benefits," was the topic of the June Working for Change forum in Washington, D.C. CSS Senior Fellows Dr. William Spriggs, Chairman, Howard University Department of Economics and Margy Waller, Executive Director of The Mobility Agenda were joined by presenters Andrew Stettner, Deputy Director, National Employment Law Project (NELP), Neil Ridley, Senior Policy Analyst, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and Dr. Edward Montgomery, Dean, College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, University of Maryland.

## July 18, 2008

"What Works? The Need to Evaluate Programs Targeting Out of School Youth," was the topic of the July Working for Change forum in Washington, D.C. Presenters were Wendy S. McClanahan, Vice President for Research, Public/Private Ventures (PPV); CSS partner Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director of the Coalition on Human Needs and Dan Bloom, Director, Welfare and Barriers to Employment Policy Area, MDRRC.

## September 26, 2008

The September Working for Change forum reception was held in recognition of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference and to salute the leadership of Rep. Charles B. Rangel, Chairman of the House Committee on Ways & Means.

## October 17, 2008

"Bailed Out or Bailed On?" The Economic Crisis and the Working Poor was the topic of the October Working for Change forum in Washington, D.C. Presenters were Dr. William Spriggs, CSS Senior Fellow and Chairman, Howard University Department of Economics; Dr. Heidi Shierholz, Economist at the Economic Policy Institute; Thomas Waters, Senior Housing Analyst at the Community Service Society of New York.

## November 14, 2008

"New President, New Congress: Now What? Stimulus for the Rest of Us?" was the topic of the November Working for Change forum in Washington, D.C. Panel discussion with David R. Jones, Esq. President & CEO Community Service Society, Dr. William Spriggs, CSS Senior Fellow and Chairman, Howard University Department of Economics; Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director, Coalition on Human Needs; and Margy Waller, CSS Senior Fellow and Executive Director, The Mobility Agenda.

## December 12, 2008

"Strengthening America's Economic Competitiveness Strategies to Improve Workforce Readiness," was the topic of the December 2008 Working for Change forum in Washington, D.C. Panelists were Elyse Rosenbaum, Director of Workforce Readiness Initiatives at Corporate Voices for Working Families; Leslie Bauer, Chief Information Officer at Radio One; Garry Burke, Year Up alumnus; John-Anthony D. Meza, National Director, Corporate Citizenship KPMG.

## January 2009

Working for Change forum was not held for the month of January 2009 because of the presidential inauguration.

## February 13, 2009

"Renters Under Assault The Hidden Housing Crisis" was the topic of the February 2009 Working for Change forum in Washington, D.C. Panelists were Dean Preston, Executive Director, Tenants Together; Danilo Pelletiere, Research Director, National Low Income Housing Coalition; and Thomas Waters, Senior Housing Analyst, Community Service Society of New York.

## March 13, 2009

"Creating Career Pathways for Young Black Males: Building Winning Strategies for Success" was the topic of the March 2009 Working for Change forum. Panelists were Adrienne Harris, Associate at Sullivan & Cromwell and Helen Mitchell, Director, Strategic Planning & Policy Development, Office of Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL).

## April 24, 2009

“Reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act: A Chance to Get It Right for Youth” was the topic of the April 2009 Working for Change forum. Presenters were Elyse Rosenblum, Vice President of Workforce Readiness, Corporate Voices for Working Families; Linda A. Harris, Director of Youth Policy of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); and Shawn Jacqueline Bohem, National Director of Strategic Growth & Impact, YEAR UP.

## May 8, 2009

Philanthropy: The “Other” Stimulus? Are the Poor and People of Color Getting a Fair Share? was the topic of the May 8, 2009 Working for Change forum. Rick Cohen, CSS Senior Policy Fellow, Philanthropy Expert presented.

## June 12, 2009

“WIA Reauthorization: Reinvigorating Workforce Development,” was the topic of the June 2009 Working for Change forum. Panelists were Neil Ridley, Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy; Cassius O. Johnson, Director, National and Federal Policy at Jobs for the Future; and Kermit Kaleba, Senior Policy Analyst with The Workforce Alliance.

## July 24, 2009

“TANF How Can it Be Effective in a Recession?” was the topic of the July 2009 Working for Change forum. Panelists were Elizabeth Lower-Basch, Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy and Heidi Shierholz, Economist at the Economic Policy Institute.

## September 25, 2009

Health Care Reform: If they build it, will the public understand it? The need for an Ombudsman program was the topic of the September 2009 Working for Change forum. Panelists were Cheryl Fish-Parcham, Deputy Director of Health Policy at Families USA; Priya Mendon, Director of NYC Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program (MCCAP ) at the Community Service Society; and Elisabeth Benjamin, Vice President for Health Initiatives at Community Service Society.

## October 9, 2009

“Creating Jobs for Public Housing Residents: Section 3 Enforcement in Public Housing” was the topic of the October 2009 Working for Change forum. Special Guest was Honorable John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Panelists were Victor Bach, Senior Housing Analyst at the Community Service Society and Aixa Aleman-Diaz, Senior Legislative Assistant for the Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez (D-NY).

## November 20, 2009

“If it’s Jobless, It’s Not a Recovery: A Jobs Agenda for a Sustained and Shared Recovery” was the topic of the November 2009 forum. Panelists were Allegra Baidier, Senior Legislative Associate at the Center for Community Change; Taja Lindley, Gail Aska Policy and Research Fellow at Community Voices Heard; and Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director at Coalition on Human Needs.

## December 11, 2009

“President Obama’s Jobs Agenda: Will Low-Wage Workers Get Left Behind?” was the topic of the December 2009 forum. Panelists were John Wilcox, Vice President of Operations at Corporate Voices for Working Families; John W. Edwards, Jr., Executive Director at Northeast Florida Community Action Agency, Inc., and Donald W. Mathis, President & CEO at Community Action Partnership.

## January 22, 2010

“Educating the Incarcerated: Learning from New Jersey’s Progressive Reforms,” was the topic of the January 2010 forum. Panelists were Cornell William Brooks, Executive Director at New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, and Juan Cartagena, General Counsel & Vice President for Advocacy at The Community Service Society of New York.

## February 26, 2010

Can Nonprofit Tax Credits Spur Job Creation? was the topic of the February 2010 forum. Panelists were Dr. Lester M. Salamon, Director of the Center for Civil Society Studies at the Institute for Policy Studies at The Johns Hopkins University; Christian Dorsey, Director of External and Government Relations at Economic Policy Institute; M. Jeff Hamond, Economic Policy Director for Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY); and Susan Rees, Director of Policy and National Projects at Wider Opportunities for Women.

## March 19, 2010

Measuring Poverty: What Truly Counts? was the topic of the March 2010 forum. Panelists were Mark Levitan, Ph.D. Director of Poverty Research at the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity; Dr. Rebecca Blank, Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs at the U.S. Department of Commerce; Shawn Fremstad, Director, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy Initiative at the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

## April 16, 2010

“TANF Emergency Fund: A New Way to Help Low-Wage Workers,” was the topic of the April 16<sup>th</sup>, forum. Panelists were Elizabeth Lower-Basch, Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP); Doug Steiger, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and Congresswoman Gwendolynne S. Moore (D-4<sup>th</sup> WI), U.S. House of Representatives.

## May 21, 2010

The topic of the May 21<sup>st</sup> forum was “If Not Now, then When? Congressional Opportunities to Address Our Nation’s Youth Unemployment Crisis.” Panelists were Mala Thakur, Executive Director at the National Youth Employment Coalition; Kisha Bird, Project Director at Campaign for Youth, CLASP; Ilana Levinson, Legislative Assistant, Office of U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow; and Christopher Brown, Legislative Director, Office of Congressman Bobby Rush (D-IL).

## June 18, 2010

The topic of the June 18<sup>th</sup> forum was “Can You Afford to Get Sick? Paid Sick Time for Low-wage Workers.” Panelists were Kevin Miller, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Women’s Policy Research; Rachna Choudhry, Manager of Policy and Advocacy at the National Partnership for Women and Families; Krista Pietrangelo, Strategic Planning & Policy Associate at the Community Service Society; and Sherry Leiwant, Executive Director at A Better Balance.

## July 23, 2010

“Strengthening Urban Communities What is the Plan?” was the topic of the July 23, forum. Panelists were Alaina Beverly, Associate Director at the White House Office of Urban Affairs; Bessy Kong, Senior Policy Advisor at the White House Domestic Policy Council; and Deborah Weinstein, Executive Director at Coalition on Human Needs.

## Dates

The following are the scheduled 2010 dates for the “Working for Change” forum. For more information about the forum, please submit your name and organization affiliation to Janeene K. Freeman, Director of Government Relations at [jfreeman@cssny.org](mailto:jfreeman@cssny.org).

- September 17th
- October 22nd
- November 19th
- December 17th

*The Community Service Society of New York (CSS) is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that does not endorse candidates for public office.*