

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION CITY NETWORK
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

Thank you for your ongoing interest in strengthening early care and education. If you have any questions about the network or this Update, contact Tonja Rucker, Senior Program Associate, Institute for Youth, Education, and Families (YEF Institute) at: rucker@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3004 or fax – 202/626-3043. The YEF Institute staff wants to thank all of the members of the Early Care and Education City Network for working so diligently on behalf of young children. Your dedication and commitment to strengthen early care and education provides numerous families with resources that improve their quality of life. We look forward to working with you and continuing to build upon the successes of initiatives launched in your community.

NLC NETWORK NEWS

- **New Report Highlights Mayor-Law Enforcement Partnerships to Protect Safety of Children and Youth.** The YEF Institute has released a new report highlighting effective collaborations between mayors and law enforcement officials to protect the safety of children and youth. *Vital Partners: Mayors and Police Chiefs Working Together for America's Children and Youth*, is the product of an intensive research, data collection, and outreach effort by the YEF Institute, the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The report describes effective partnerships in cities of every size and region. Topics addressed in the report include prevention of gang violence, bullying, and substance abuse; creating safe places for recreation; effective neighborhood policing programs; and partnerships with diverse stakeholders. To order a copy of the report email: iyef@nlc.org.
- **FFN Care Initiative.** Research is showing that the majority of infants, toddlers, and children in low-income families are in Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care (FFN care) — care provided by parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, other relatives, friends, and neighbors. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's 2006 KIDS COUNT Data Book predicts that FFN care will be the most common type of child care for low-income children under the age of six with working parents. In 2007, the YEF Institute plans to address FFN care by working with our national partners and city leaders to improve the quality of FFN care. The ultimate goal is ensure a successful early care and education experience for a city's youngest residents. If you are interested in addressing FFN care at the local level and would be interested in working with the YEF Institute please contact Tonja Rucker, Senior Program Associate at: rucker@nlc.org, phone – 202/626-3004.
- **Job Openings at the YEF Institute.** The YEF Institute is seeking qualified candidates for two positions: Program Associate for Youth Development; and Program Associate for Early Childhood and Family Economic Success. To view the full job announcement visit: [<>](http://www.nlc.org/inside_nlc/job_opportunities_at_nlc/839.cfm).

- **National League of Cities Congressional Cities Conference, March 10-14, 2007.** The National League of Cities will be convening city leaders from across the country for its annual Congressional Cities Conference in March 2007 in Washington, D.C. The conference concentrates on federal policy affecting cities. This conference differs from the NLC annual Congress of Cities in that it offers an opportunity to learn about federal legislative issues affecting cities, develop and strengthen relationships with members of Congress, and to advocate local position on key priorities. For more information and registration go to:
http://www.nlc.org/Conferences_Events/Congressional_City_Conference/.
- **Adopt the Platform for Strengthening Families.** NLC's *City Platform for Strengthening Families*, developed by municipal officials from cities of all sizes and regions of the country, outlines four essential tasks that are necessary for sustained progress to be made on behalf of children, youth, and families. The platform also offers a menu of action steps in seven areas to provide city officials with ideas for getting started. More than 40 cities in 23 states have now formally adopted the platform and are using it as a framework to guide and assess local action and a way to highlight their commitment to helping young people and their families succeed. Cities can formally adopt the platform through a city council resolution, mayoral proclamation, or other public announcement. View the List of Cities and Learn How to Adopt the Platform:
<http://www.nlc.org/iyef/a%5Fcity%5Fplatform/>

CITY SPOTLIGHT: Washington, DC (Pop. 550,521)

NOTE: This spotlight provides an opportunity to gather ideas from other network members. Each month, we will spotlight a new city or region. You are encouraged to share information about your local efforts, so that we can spotlight your activities and best practices in a future update.

Elected Officials Supporting Early Care and Education

The District of Columbia's commitment and investment in young children is substantial. Under then leadership of Mayor Anthony A. Williams, and with strong support from the City Council, the District added \$37 million to the budget for early childhood services over a two-year period beginning in 2005. In addition, under the leadership of the DC Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders, DC's first Children's budget was developed and accompanied the Mayor's 2007 budget submission. The Children's Budget details the District's proposed spending on children and youth across all city agencies. Children's Budget development non-governmental partners included: AFFIRM, Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, D.C. Action for Children, DC Fiscal Policy Institute, DC Primary Care Association, and the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs.

Another important partner in the District's investment in young children is the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development. Created in 1979, this entity brings together public and private agencies and individuals concerned with early childhood development to develop plans and coordinate services for young children. The committee serves as advocates for improvement of programs; make recommendations to the mayor, review and comment on legislation, procedures and issues; and issue an annual report. Thirty members (20 from non-governmental agencies in early childhood development, three at-large members, and eight representatives of DC government) and a chairperson are appointed by the Mayor.

The newly elected mayor, Adrian M. Fenty, unveiled his plan to provide the city's children with hope and opportunity through an education reform initiative. One of the major priorities is to ensure that all children start school ready to learn. In the District, elected leaders from the mayor to the city council, continue to address the importance of early care and education and improving the public safety, health, and well-being of its' youngest residents.

Nationally Recognized Programs

The Early Care and Education Administration (ECEA), a branch within the District's Department of Human Services, monitors and supports the provision of high quality early care and education. ECEA is using the influx of funding to provide technical assistance and funding for several unique early care and education programs. Descriptions of three nationally recognized programs are listed below.

DC Developing Families Center (DCDFC) is comprised of three nonprofit service providers: the DC Birth Center, the Healthy Babies Project, and Nation's Capital Child and Family Development. A unique umbrella organization, DCDFC is the first collaboration model of its kind to offer continuous, uninterrupted care for women and their families during the important childbearing and early child-rearing years. Services include health checkups for women, children, and teens; immunizations; pregnancy testing; prenatal care and education; a free-standing, homelike birth center; early childhood development services; social service assistance; job training; and continuing education. All services are provided under one roof in a personalized setting that is easily accessible to the low-income communities of Carver Terrace and Trinidad/Ivy City in northeast Washington, DC.

CentroNia provides affordable, high quality education, professional development, and family support services to nearly 1,200 low-income Latino, African American, and multiethnic children, youth, and families in the Washington area. The Learning Center provides quality early childhood education and out of school time educational support and arts enrichment services through its Infant/Toddler Center; the Bilingual Early Childhood Program; and a School Age/Youth Development Program. The Professional Development Academy (PDA) offers professional certification in early childhood education through the Child Development Associate (CDA) Training Program. Partnering with other local organizations the PDA offers a licensing program for Family Day Care home providers. The DC Bilingual Public Charter School opened its doors with 122 students in early Pre-K and kindergarten. DC Bilingual seeks to implement an academically demanding dual language program that will foster bilingualism and bi-literacy for all children.

Bright Beginnings is a child and family development center for homeless families living in shelters and transitional housing programs across the District of Columbia. Services include free, full day, year round, developmentally appropriate care, on-site therapeutic support, and comprehensive family support services. Bright Beginnings alleviates a major source of anxiety for homeless parents by providing their children with a safe, nurturing, secure environment. Social workers provide parents with referrals to shelters, food banks, mental health services, child protective services, disability services, and educational job training programs. To address the special health needs of its children and families, Bright Beginnings provides on-site therapeutic services, preventative health screening and closely monitors the children's nutrition. A team of therapeutic specialists work with children, teachers and parents to provide individual

therapy plans, in-service trainings, classroom interventions and on-going family consultations. In the classrooms children learn.

Accomplishments of the Early Care and Education Administration

In addition, ECEA has forged some unique partnerships to formulate an effective continuum of services and care for District children 5 years of age and younger. Some of the administration's accomplishments are listed below:

- **Subsidized Child Care:** In FY 2005, ECEA suspended the waiting list for child care subsidy and provided subsidized child care and before and after care services for 21,677 children of low-income parents in the District. ECEA served 68 percent of the 31,500 eligible children in the District by ensuring that they received the benefit of early childhood education and development through placement in licensed early child care centers and family child care homes.
- **Standards for Children Entering Kindergarten:** To help ensure that children enter school ready to learn, ECEA collaborated with the DC Public Schools, community-based organizations, researchers and other child care experts. ECEA established and recommended a comprehensive set of completed early learning standards for children entering kindergarten in the District. The standards were adopted by the DC School Board of Education, the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development and the Universal School Readiness and Out of School Time Stakeholders.
- **Increasing Child Care Professional Development Opportunities:** ECEA provides training and professional development opportunities to the early care and education community, which includes scholarships and mentoring towards obtaining the Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, as well as AA and BA degrees in early childhood education and child development. In FY 2005, ECEA helped 197 early care and education professionals receive scholarships to work towards earning AA and BA degrees and assisted 1,540 individuals in receiving CDA Credentials. ECEA encouraged 165 teachers to participate in two summer institutes hosted by the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at the University of the District of Columbia, and 1,557 early care and education professionals attended the weekly workshops of the Health, Safety, Nutrition and Mental Health Training Program coordinated by ECEA.
- **Supporting Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities:** ECEA's Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program screened 3,387 infants and toddlers for potential developmental delays or disabilities. The program received 823 referrals for eligibility and determination and served a total of 570 children for early intervention services and supports. Additionally, a minimum of five parents serve on the Interagency Coordinating Council, which provides leadership in developing a comprehensive network of early intervention services.
- **Pre-Kindergarten Incentive and Early Readers Now Programs:** In FY 2005, ECEA launched the Pre-Kindergarten Incentive Demonstration Program with funding from the DC Public Schools to provide 21 high quality preschool classrooms for over 300 three and four year-old children at community based organizations throughout the District. In addition, ECEA received \$10 million in local funds to serve four-year-old children. ECEA also established the *Early Readers Now* program of volunteers that read aloud to

young children at early child care centers and developed and distributed thousands of its *Read Baby Read* book lists to low-income parents throughout the District.

- **Child Care for City Employees:** The city provides on and near site child care for its employees. Currently there are six centers and one is a 24 hour, seven days a week site, which opened in fall of 2006. This site serves municipal employees who operate the 911 fire and police call centers emergency management and the District government general call center. DC also has a child care center at the Superior Court providing services for children ages two through fourteen for parents and guardians who are jurors, witnesses or have other business at the courts.
- **Scholarships:** ECEA partners with the Council of Governments to provide higher education scholarships for persons who work in community based early childhood programs. Participating institutions of higher education forgive up to fifty percent of the tuition for courses. Scholarships are awarded for the Associates/Bachelors and Masters Degrees.
- **Research Conferences:** ECEA partners with the Early Childhood Leadership Institute at UDC and Child Trends to convene literacy researchers of color from across the U.S. Topics of discussion include research related to improving the literacy of persons who work in early childhood programs. The 2006 conference was in partnership with the federal Child Care Bureau. Universal School Readiness (USR) Stakeholders sponsor an annual free conference that attracts over 1,000 parents, teachers, administrators and advocates.
- **Child Care Profiles:** Every two years, ECEA, in partnership with the Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy at the University of the District of Columbia produces child care profiles of early child care services District-wide and by ward. The profiles include population facts, licensed child care supply, children on waiting lists, estimated numbers of children needing services, types of services offered, types of providers, provider salaries, type of benefits offered by providers, daily child care rates and median years of service by position. Survey response rates average 70 percent.

For additional information contact: Barbara Kamara, Administrator, Early Care and Education Administration, District of Columbia Department of Human Services 202-727-1839 or barbara.kamara@dc.gov.

STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT: HELPING FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN MAKE ENDS MEET

NOTE: Strategy spotlights can help spark ideas that might be appropriate for your community. If you have additional approaches to contribute on this month's topic, please pass them along so we can add them to this list for future use.

The nation is becoming more sensitive to economic challenges facing families with young children. Many of these families often fall into the low to moderate income group and are faced with special financial challenges. They generally have less of a cushion to absorb unanticipated expenses or to deal with adverse circumstances, such as the loss of employment or a serious

health problem. These families are also significantly less likely to maintain a checking or savings account and are less able than others to manage their debts.

The disparities between low and middle income families can be addressed by helping families of modest means build assets and improve their overall economic well-being. To be economically secure, families need both income and assets. Regular income helps families pay for their daily living expenses and assets help families to weather financial hardships and get ahead.

With the demands, stress, and isolation often associated with parenting young children, communities may need to take a look at how to ensure that parents are aware and connected to programs that support an economically healthy start for young families. This is a crisis that threatens the stability of community and family life across this nation. It is important for city officials to promote and serve as an advocate for community economic development, financial education, and programs that encourage saving and investment for families with young children.

THE STRATEGY IN FOCUS

Besides struggling with slow or stagnant income growth, parents today have to contend with new costs associated with raising a family, such as child care and unpaid leave. Moreover, the market has priced basic items such as health care, child care, and housing above what many families can afford. It will take an economic safety net to truly help families make ends meet.

According to the Economic Policy Institute's 2001 *Hardships of America Report*, many families do not meet their basic family budget which include the costs for every major expense item, including housing, child care, health care, food, transportation, and taxes. Twenty-nine percent of all families with one to two adults and one to three children under 12 have incomes below family budget levels. Additionally, large majorities of families that are not typically thought of as the most needy, such as two-parent families, white families, families with a worker with a high school education or more, families with at least one full-time worker, and families headed by a worker over 30, were also struggling to get by.

The economic well-being of families is an important issue to address in that children in poverty are extremely vulnerable. Children living in families with lower incomes are found to be at a greater risk of experiencing negative outcomes and poor living conditions than those in higher-income families. Environmental influences can enhance or detract from children's ability to optimize their potential. According to data from the 2000 National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth, it is vitally important to help parents become economically sound so that they can create a home environment that is critical to healthy child development. Some of the findings to the survey are listed below:

- More than one quarter of low-income children live in neighborhoods where there is drug use, excessive public drinking, or youth unrest compared to one tenth of children in higher income families;
- Children in low-income families are twice as likely to be in the top 10 percent in terms of frequency of delinquent behaviors, compared to children in modest-income families;

- Children in low-income families are over two and one-half times more likely than children in high-income families to have a problem with one or more basic abilities such as vision, hearing, speech or mobility;
- More than one third of children from low-income families exhibit delayed vocabulary development, compared to only eight percent of children in high-income families

Municipal leaders can build upon their capacity to take action toward helping families with young children increase their economic stability. Asset building is a key anti-poverty strategy that not only can help low- and moderate-income families become more financially stable but can also provide an economic cushion for future generations. Local elected officials across the country have discovered a way to strengthen working families while bring more federal dollars into the local economy: by connecting eligible workers to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The EITC, along with similar state tax credits, provides a financial boost to these families by reducing their tax burden and, in many cases, giving them a tax refund when they file their annual income tax return. These tax credits can greatly improve families' chances for economic success while also strengthening local and regional economies. For this reason, hundreds of mayors and city councilmembers across the country are taking action to help residents claim this substantial resource.

Local elected officials have a unique opportunity to help ensure that all eligible families in their community learn about and have access to federal and state tax credits. In addition, it is important to promote asset building programs that encourage wealth building. Assets provide a safety net for coping with unanticipated expenses and emergencies that could otherwise cause significant financial hardship. Assets also help families build wealth and plan for the future. It is important that all segments of the community work together to improve both present and future economic well-being and quality of life for families with young children. Investing in an array of programs, resources, and supports systems will help working families meet their basic needs and begin the process of accumulating wealth for the future.

WHAT CITY LEADERS CAN DO:

- **Initiate public education campaigns to promote public benefits.** Municipal officials can use their visibility with the general public to ensure that eligible families hear about and know how to claim tax credits and other work supports. Key opportunities include: public speeches to community members; town hall and city council meetings; business roundtables; newspaper editorials; television interviews; and special programs on cable TV local access channels. City leaders can also help get the word out by distributing information through city agencies, putting advertisements on public transit, engaging the media, and asking businesses to get involved.
- **Use screening tools to help families determine if they are likely to be eligible for supports.** One way to encourage families to apply for work supports is to demonstrate that they are likely to be eligible and that the benefit will be substantial enough to make a difference. Programs that already check family income – such as the Head Start or the school lunch programs – can be asked to inform families that they may be eligible for additional supports. Some cities include simple prescreening questions on a portion of their website to do quick calculations of whether a family is likely to be eligible. Others

set up programs to do prescreening in person at designated locations that are utilized and trusted by low-income families.

- **Set up free tax preparation and other benefit enrollment programs.** Mayors can develop local coalitions to initiate or expand free tax preparation programs, often with the help of the IRS through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. City leaders can also work with state or county benefit programs to get enrollment specialists out-stationed in city buildings, schools, or community-based organizations. Alternatively, work support centers that include access to free tax preparation, access to benefit enrollment programs, and access to asset building opportunities such as financial education classes, bank accounts, and savings programs can make a variety of federal, state and local work supports available under one roof.
- **Offer financial education training.** Financial literacy courses or one-on-one financial counseling can help families set budgets, develop savings plans, repair credit, and avoid predatory lenders. Financial education can be offered in a variety of existing settings, e.g. at family resource centers, a library, in conjunction with adult basic education or English as a second language courses, or through emergency service centers.
- **Work with local financial institutions to increase access to financial services.** Many low-income families do not have bank accounts, making money management more difficult forcing them to use costly check cashers for simple financial transactions. Mayors and city councilmembers can encourage local banks to open branches in underserved neighborhoods, offer free or low-cost accounts, and partner with the city or local nonprofits to provide financial education training. Through these efforts, financial institutions can gain new customers, positive publicity, and new opportunities to meet their obligations under the Community Reinvestment Act to reinvest in low-income neighborhoods.
- **Help families build assets through matched savings.** While wages and other work supports may help families cover day-to-day expenses, it can be difficult for low-income families to save for substantial investments that help them move toward self-sufficiency, like going to college, starting a business, or buying a house. City leaders can offer – or help families take advantage of – Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) to support their efforts to save for these goals. IDAs are matched savings programs that typically provide anywhere from \$1 to \$3 in matching funds for every \$1 a participating family saves.
- **Build the supply of child care.** Cities and towns have used a wide range of funding sources to help build new child care facilities, from federal Child Care & Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and public housing funds to dedicated local tax revenues. Direct grants, donated space in city-owned buildings, and revolving loan funds can also provide much-needed assistance to start new child care programs. Municipalities can promote private development by providing incentives or requiring local developers to include child care facilities in their plans. Finally, city modifications to zoning or licensing requirements can facilitate the development of new child care programs in previously off-limits commercial or residential areas.
- **Create first-time homebuyer programs.** Cities can encourage homeownership through local first-time homebuyer programs. Officials can use federal grant dollars such as the HOME Block Grant or Community Development Block Grant funding to create and support homebuyer programs for low-income families. Leaders can also use local tax dollars to encourage home ownership. Cities can offer home buying counseling, down payment assistance, mortgage assistance, and emergency assistance to first time

homebuyers as well as encourage developers to build affordable housing for low-income families through local tax incentives. City leaders cite an increasing number of foreclosures as posing significant problems for families' economic stability. To protect borrowers, cities are implementing education programs on topics such as foreclosure prevention and anti-predatory lending..

CITY EXAMPLES

The cities listed below are engaged in various activities and efforts to increase the economic stability of families with young children.

- **Seattle, Washington.** The City of Seattle has a long history of innovative initiatives to support low-income residents. Extremely high housing costs have prevented many low- and moderate-income families from pursuing the American dream through homeownership. In 2002, the city launched the Help for Working Families initiative, now called "PeoplePoint", an electronic screening tool that has streamlined the cities' capacity to connect residents with other benefits as well, including food stamps, utilities assistance, and child care. The city also added two new city-funded benefits to the system. The new benefits are predicted to serve 194 children through the city-funded pre-school program and 500 residents have already taken advantage of the new city utilities emergency assistance program. The city also partners with many local organizations to conduct a very strong EITC outreach campaign that continues to grow each year. In 2006, the city's work resulted in 8,163 returns with \$3.2 million in EITC refunds and over \$2.3 million in child tax credits back to the community. Moreover, the city offers other savings and banking services to residents, such as IDAs.

Working with the Federal Reserve Bank, the city also plans to partner with more local financial institutions to bring mainstream financial services to low-income communities that have not had access to those services. Seattle is very interested in using a program model for this that is similar to the "Bank on San Francisco" model that was developed by the Mayor Newsom and Treasurer Cisneros in San Francisco.

The city is also working with the Medina Foundation to develop a new credit union that be targeted to meet the needs of low-income working people. Moreover, the Seattle team is currently exploring ways to restrict predatory financial practices at the local level and at the state level.

- **Oskaloosa, Iowa.** The city council passed an ordinance creating the Oskaloosa Housing Trust Fund to increase the affordable housing stock and to improve home ownership opportunities for community residents. Activities of the trust fund include managing and funding several programs, including a rental rehabilitation loan fund that provides loans of up to \$7,500 per dwelling unit, issued at five percent interest with a ten-year term; a fund to encourage development of affordable housing through the provision of a 3 percent interest construction loan in the amount of \$20,000 to contractors or developers; the First-Time Homebuyer Down Payment and Closing Cost Program that assisted 115 families in its first three years; and a program to assist lower income families utilizing the first-time homebuyer program to make improvements and correct problems in their new homes.

- **Louisville, Kentucky.** The Louisville Asset Building Coalition (LABC), a broad-based group of community stakeholders, was formed in 2003 to promote financial self-sufficiency and asset building for Louisville residents. The Louisville Metro Government has worked closely with this coalition since its inception on all aspects of asset-building strategies. LABC became involved in EITC outreach and promotion in 2003 and hosted eight free tax preparation sites throughout the region. This number grew to 15 in 2006, preparing over 3,100 returns and bringing more than \$12 million in federal and state tax refunds into the pockets of residents. The tax sites also helped people to open bank accounts with their refunds and set up IDA savings accounts through partner organizations.

During the first phase of the project, the city conducted a DollarWi\$e campaign to bring financial education services to residents. Later in the year, Louisville Metro hosted an Assets Summit in which community stakeholders were brought together for a meeting to discuss existing asset-building programs in Louisville. The stakeholders included community programs, university and college participants, financial institutions, non-profit providers, mayor's office and government staff, and private businesses. This convening was the first step in a process to map existing services and share information with residents about those services.

Louisville Metro has been planning the launch a *Louisville Saves* campaign modeled after the national *America Saves* program designed to help connect residents to bank accounts. The city has already conducted a training seminar for wealth coaches that will staff the program.

- **Savannah, Georgia.** The City of Savannah has revamped its EITC initiative to greatly expand participation and initiate a focus on financial education and IDAs. City staff, along with the local asset-building coalition, has reached out to the faith-based community to deliver financial education workshops to members of that community.

As part of its poverty reduction initiative, the city has developed a pilot program to provide intensive services, including asset-building services, to 25 families that are living in poverty. This pilot project has been promoted by Savannah's City Manager, Michael Brown. It is designed to help the city learn about the specific barriers that poor families face to building financial security. The program is staffed by volunteers assigned to each family to provide comprehensive support. Two local neighborhood organizations are also receiving stipends to work closely with the families.

The City of Savannah has implemented several poverty simulations to educate residents of the city about the problem of poverty. These poverty simulations have been featured on National Public Radio as an innovative model. Participants in the simulations — government leaders, heads of businesses, civic groups and others — spend an evening role-playing as people living in or on the brink of poverty. Poverty simulations are held monthly and carried out by trained city and community officials. Of the estimated 1000 people who have taken part in Savannah's poverty simulations, including more than 200 business and government leaders, nearly one third of all participants have become involved in some aspect of the city's Poverty Reduction Initiative.

RESOURCES

NLC's Helping Working Families Action Kit — This action kit describes steps that mayors, city council members, and other municipal leaders can take to help working families by developing city-led outreach campaigns. It tells how to get started, describes proven outreach strategies, and offers background information and suggestions on places you can turn for help to start you on your way! For more information see:

<http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/HWF%20Action%20Kit.pdf>.

NLC's Screening Tools to Help Families Access Public Benefits — This tool provides municipal officials with approaches, considerations, and specific technology options for using screening tools to connect eligible residents to key state and federal benefits. Highlighted in the report are several local, state, and nationally franchised electronic screening tools utilized by city governments. For more information see:

<http://www.nlc.org/content/Files/IYEF%20Screening%20Tools.pdf>.

Maximizing the Earned Income Tax Credit in Your Community: A Toolkit for Municipal Leaders — This NLC toolkit highlights the diverse roles that local governments can play in helping families claim this important resource. To assist municipalities in developing an EITC campaign, the guide offers concrete steps, advice from existing campaigns, specific roles for elected leaders, city examples, and links to important resources. For more information see:

<http://www.nlc.org/nlctoolkit/html/>

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' 2007 Earned Income Tax Credit Outreach Kit — The kit provides new materials on both the EIC and CTC, including newly revised English and Spanish posters and flyers, a fact sheet booklet on the EIC and the CTC, a booklet featuring new looks at strategies for promoting these credits, and a booklet on ways to link workers to free tax help and asset development programs. For more information see: <http://www.cbpp.org/eic2007/>.

Corporate Voice for Working Families' 2007 EITC Employer Toolkit — The kit provides information on multiple federal programs including the EITC, CTC, State Children's Health Insurance (SCHIP), food stamps, and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). For more information see:

<http://cvworkingfamilies.org/Employerguide/employerguide.shtml>.

Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) — CFED is a nonprofit organization that expands economic opportunity. Established in 1979 CFED works to ensure that every person can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the economy by bringing together community practice, public policy, and private markets. They identify promising ideas; test and refine them in communities to find out what works; craft policies and products to help good ideas reach scale; and foster new markets to achieve greater economic impact. For more information see:

<http://www.cfed.org/>.

National Economic Development & Law Center (NEDLC) — NEDLC is a national research and consulting organization dedicated to building economic health and opportunity in vulnerable communities. They partner with a diverse range of colleagues to develop innovative strategies and programs that result in systemic change and help people become and remain economically secure. For more information see: <http://www.nedlc.org/>.

The National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) — NCRC seeks to increase fair and equal access to credit, capital, and banking services and products by providing resources, knowledge, and skills to build community and individual net wealth. The second edition of NCRC's Anti-Predatory Lending Toolkit reviews the state of the fair housing law; how predatory lending manifests itself; case developments; the relationship among civil rights, the Community Reinvestment Act, and predatory lending; and proposed and enacted state and local laws. For more information see: <http://www.ncrc.org>.

Useful websites:

Association for Enterprise Opportunity (AEO) — AEO is the national association of community-based organizations that provide entrepreneurial education, access to capital, and support to aspiring and active low-income entrepreneurs. AEO provides its members with a forum, information, and a voice to promote enterprise opportunity for people and communities with limited resources. For more information visit: <http://www.microenterpriseworks.org/>.

USDA Online Screening Tool — Free internet based screening tool, for food stamps only. <http://209.48.219.49/fns/>.

The National Community Tax Coalition resource page on Financial Education, Banking, and Asset-Building Programs Linked to Free Tax Preparation Programs. <http://www.tax-coalition.org/fiancedu.htm>.

Consumer Credit Counseling Service. <http://www.ccsintl.org>.

NLC Asset Building Project.

http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/family_economic_success/7496.cfm.

NLC Benefits for Working Families Project.

http://www.nlc.org/iyef/program_areas/family_economic_success/428.cfm.

Publications:

Strategies to Build Assets Among Low-Income Families: Mapping the Field, by Christianne Lind and Pamela Friedman, The Finance Project, December 2006. This strategy brief aims to help practitioners, policymakers, and program developers understand how to expand asset-building opportunities for low-income families. It presents promising strategies and considerations for improving savings and investments among this population. It also lays out key areas for further work and investment to help guide decision makers in the public sector, business community, and foundation community as they seek to support activities that improve outcomes for low-income families and communities. This resource is available on the Web at:

<http://www.financeproject.org/publications/StrategiestoBuildAssets.pdf>.

Credit Scores, Reports, and Getting Ahead in America by Matt Fellowes, The Brookings Institute, May 2006. The researcher conducted a research analysis of data obtained from TransUnion's trend database. The analysis consisted of a quarterly sample of 25 million anonymous consumer credit reports and scores for every U.S. county between 1999 and 2004. Results show that consumer credit reports and scores play a growing role in the ability of families to get ahead, now influencing prices for loans and insurance and efforts to get jobs and

rent apartments. This resource is available on the Web at:
http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060501_creditscores.pdf.

A HAND UP: How State Earned Income Tax Credits Help Working Families Escape Poverty In 2006 by Ami Nagle and Nicholas Johnson, The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, , March 2006. This report examines how states enact EITC's that reduce child poverty, increase effective wages, and cut taxes for families struggling to make ends meet. This resource is available on the Web at: <http://www.cbpp.org/3-8-06sfp.pdf>.

The Culture of Money A Framework for Understanding the Impact of Race, Ethnicity and Color on the Implementation of Asset-Building Strategies by Orson Watson, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, February 2006. The report provides a new lens for understanding the cultural, historic, and economic factors that impact consumer choice in target communities of color. The key message highlighted throughout this paper is that for financial education efforts to be effective, they must be linked to changes in the economic and financial service context of low-income communities of color. In addition, this paper strongly emphasizes the critical importance of developing an accurate profile of a program's target audience (or market) before developing intervention strategies. The paper provides examples of how community-level practitioners and program managers have considered racial and ethnic dynamics and adapted mainstream strategies to their clientele. This resource is available on the Web at:
http://www.aecf.org/lists/fes/aug06/the_culture_of_money.pdf.

Does Making Work Pay Still Pay? An Update on the Effects of Four Earnings Supplement Programs on Employment, Earnings, and Income by Charles Michalopoulos, MDRC, August 2005. This report describes recent results from four studies of programs that supplemented the earnings of low-income adults. The four studies, which took place beginning in the early 1990s were intended to encourage work and to boost the income of adults who worked. Each was studied using a reliable research design that randomly assigned people to a program group that was eligible for earnings supplements or to a control group that was not. This report updates effects on economic outcomes after the earnings supplement programs ended. This resource is available on the Web at: <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/414/full.pdf>.

RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITIES

New Design Guides From Child Welfare League Of America's Creating Parenting-Rich Communities Initiative —The guides connect users with current online research information for educating decision makers about topics related to parent support, and for helping program developers draft informed grant proposals or policy statements. Information is organized under eight key areas: child care and after school activities; education; employment; family structure and support; financial security; health; housing; and safe neighborhoods and environments. To learn more visit: <http://www.cwla.org/parenting/cprcdesignguide.htm>.

Fact Sheet on Child Poverty — A new fact sheet from the National Center for Children in Poverty finds that 18% of children (nearly 13 million children) live in families with income below the official poverty measure, and it is widely agreed that the poverty measure understates the true extent of economic hardship. The fact sheet describes the characteristics of children who

are officially poor and identifies public policy strategies for improving the well-being of children and families. To learn more visit: http://nccp.org/pub_cpt06a.html.

Prenatal through Pre-K: Building Bright Futures — A new policy fact sheet published by the ZERO TO THREE Policy Center describes policy recommendations for building a continuum of services for children prenatal through age 5, so that policy decisions support the optimal development of our youngest children. To learn more visit: <http://www.zerotothree.org/policy/factsheets/Nov%2006%20Pre-K%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.

Updated Child Advocacy Primer — Voices for America's Children's updated Advocacy Primer can help you hone your communications efforts, create your legislative agenda, engage your community, and more. Each chapter focuses on an advocacy skill and profiles how member organizations have used the skill to improve the lives of children. There's also a section for your feedback. To learn more visit: http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=xzpr59bab.0.skzs49bab.4aek4xbab.25766&ts=S0216&p=http://www.voiceforamericaschildren.org/Template.cfm?Section=Press_Room&CONTENTID=7838&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm.

New Child Care Facilities Resource Guides — LISC's national child care program, has just released its two latest child care resource guides completing a four volume series of "how-to" guides to assist organizations that are planning to renovate, construct or improve their early childhood facilities. *Developing Early Childhood Facilities* identifies all of the steps in the real estate development and financing process, and helps child care providers and their partners overcome the hurdles that every project faces. *Designing Early Childhood Facilities* highlights the important connection between well-designed space and quality child care programming and helps providers, their development partners, and their architects create an effective space for young children. To learn more visit: <http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/3518/> and <http://www.lisc.org/content/publications/detail/3520>.

New Online Child Care Directory — A new site allows parents around the country to search for local home-based, center-based, and pre-school child care. To learn more visit: <http://www.ziggybug.com/>.

A Demographic Portrait of Young Hispanic Children in the United States — The National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics has released a demographic portrait of the population of young Hispanic children in the U.S. To learn more visit: http://www.ecehispanic.org/work/demoportrait_brief.pdf.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

Suburban Poverty Now Outnumbers Urban Poverty by Alan Berube and Elizabeth Kneebone, Brookings Institution, 2006. An analysis of poverty in cities and suburbs of the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas, based on data from the 2005 American Community Survey and Census 2000, indicates that in 1999 large cities and their suburbs had nearly equal numbers of poor individuals, but by 2005 the suburban poor outnumbered their city counterparts by at least 1 million. At the local level, the enduring social and fiscal challenges for cities that stem from high poverty are increasingly shared by their suburbs. Findings from the analysis is available at: http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20061205_citysuburban.pdf

New Study: High-Quality Teaching In Preschool Closes Achievement Gap by Robert Pianta, University of Virginia,, A new study reported in the winter issue of the Hoover Institution's journal *Education Next* says children from low-education households who were placed in high-quality classrooms achieved at the same level as those whose mothers had college degrees. Moreover, children displaying previous problem behavior showed achievement and adjustment levels identical to children who had no history of problems. Findings from the study are available at: <http://www.hoover.org/publications/ednext/4612287.html>.

The Potential of Title I for High-Quality Preschool: by Danielle Ewen and Hannah Matthews, CLASP. This presentation provides a brief overview of Title I of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, explains how these funds may be used to support high-quality preschool, and offers several illustrative models of school districts using Title I funds for early education. It also provides background information making the case for investments in young, low-income children, along with relevant policy implications that may affect the availability of Title I funding for such programs. (31 slides) http://www.clasp.org/publications/potential_titlei.pdf.

Too Close to Turn Back: Covering America's Children by the Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, December 2006. The report identifies key issues in the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The report urges Congress to provide enough funding to cover more children, eliminate barriers to child health coverage, and address quality and accountability issues. The report is available at: <http://ccf.georgetown.edu/pdfs/121206tooclosereport.pdf>.

Education Week's Annual Quality Counts report has tracked state policies for improving K-12 education. The 11th annual report from *Education Week* presents information on which states provide their young people with the best opportunity to succeed academically and professionally and examines state efforts to create a more seamless education system. The "Chance-for-Success Index," created by the EPE Research Center, highlights whether young children get off to a good start, succeed in elementary and secondary school, and hit key educational and income benchmarks as adults. The report is available at: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/01/04/17execsum.h26.html>.

Better Outcomes for All: Promoting Partnerships between Head Start and State Pre-K, by Pre-K Now and CLASP, January 2007. This report looks at Head Start-State Pre-K Collaboration. A new report published by Pre-K Now in collaboration with the Center for Law and Social Policy examines how federally funded Head Start and state-funded pre-K programs can work together for the educational betterment of children. The authors interviewed key players in states like Illinois, New Jersey and Wisconsin where such collaborations are already taking place. While such collaborations are still the exception rather than the rule, they can produce substantial benefits like conducting joint professional development and better allocation of costs and services. Read the report at: http://preknow.org/documents/HeadStartPreKCollaboration_Jan2007.pdf.

Salaries for Staff: Costs to Children, State-By-State Wage Data for The Early Childhood Education Workforce, by the Center for the Child Care Workforce, 2006. A recent Center for the Child Care Workforce/AFTEF report finds that while pre-K teachers have seen a slight increase in pay over the past five years, early child care workers are actually earning less than before. The report can be found at: <http://ccw.cleverspin.com/pubs/2005Compendium.pdf>.