



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**  
**Institute for Youth, Education, and Families**

*A Helping Hand for Working Families: What Cities Can Do*  
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*Speakers:*

**Julie Wilen**, assistant commissioner in the Mayor's Office of  
Workforce Development in Chicago, Illinois.

**Rosario Rocca**, the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) outreach  
coordinator in the Laredo, Texas Health Department.

**Tina Cheatham**, who is responsible in the U.S. government's Health Resources and  
Services administration for children's health insurance outreach.

*KYLE:* Welcome. I'm John Kyle with the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. Today, we're talking specifically about what cities can do to provide a helping hand for working families. An emphasis on the fact that there are many families eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit or eligible for child health insurance or eligible for food stamps. Yet many families who are eligible are not applying and being enrolled in these programs. In some cities and some states, there are outreach campaigns that cities are participating in or leading to ensure more enrolment. Today, we're going to talk about those outreach campaigns and what communities are doing and what successes they're seeing and why they're doing them.

We have two guests on the line with us right now. We have Julie Wilen, who is the assistant commissioner in the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development in Chicago, Illinois. And we have Rosario Rocca, who is the CHIP -- Child Health Insurance Program -- outreach coordinator in the Laredo, Texas Health Department and we have Tina Cheatham, who is responsible in the U.S. government's Health Resources and Services Administration for children's health insurance outreach. There is not a particular speaker about food stamps in this call, but each of the speakers will be able to help us with how to generalize some of the outreach efforts that we're working on and how they cross over among these three programs.

I'm going to start with Julie to just give us a brief commonsense definition of what EITC is. What are we talking about when we talk about the Earned Income Tax Credit?

*WILEN:* The federal Earned Income Tax Credit -- EITC -- provides moderate and lower income working families and individuals with tax relief and incentive to work. EITC was created by Congress in 1975, so it's been around for a while. The EITC provides a lump sum payment to working families and individuals below certain income levels. It puts much needed money in the pockets of workers with modest incomes.

One thing that's really important to know about the EITC is that it is actually a refund. It is not just reduction of an individual's taxes. The EITC can provide a tax refund to families whose incomes are low enough that they don't even owe any federal taxes.

Individuals or workers earning less than about \$31,000 -- a little bit over -- \$31,152 -- who have two or more children can receive up to \$3,880 dollars back, so it's a nice refund. [In 2002, the levels changed so that EITC can provide up to \$2,506 for a family with one child earning less than \$28,281. Workers who are raising more than one child and earning less than \$32,121 can qualify for up to \$4,140.] The average EITC credit for a year is about \$1,500. But one of the best things about the credit is that it can be claimed three years retroactively if individuals have not claimed it previously. So it's a really great tax incentive for people to work.

*KYLE:* Great. I hope that one of the things we can learn more about as we go into the call is some of these features of going backwards to collect it and some of the obstacles that people have found to collecting it.

Before we start talking about those particular outreach efforts, Rosario, could you help us a little bit to understand what CHIP is about -- the Child Health Insurance Program?

*ROCCA:* CHIP covers children from birth to the age of 18 who do not qualify for Medicaid. They may pay as little as \$15 dollars per year or as much as \$18 per month, depending on the family size and income. The co-pays for office visits and prescriptions are based on the family's income and will cost anywhere from \$2 to \$10 per visit or prescription.

Benefits from the health insurance will cover regular checkups and doctor's visits, shots, immunizations, eye exams and glasses, prescription drugs and medical supplies, hospital care and services, care by medical specialists, x-rays and lab tests, dental care and mental health care.

What the Health Department is really doing is letting the people know what CHIP is about, what benefits are included with the CHIP program. Basically, we just want the people to know that CHIP is available to them and they should take advantage of this health insurance right now.

*KYLE:* Good. I think that gives a good working knowledge of these two programs. What I want to talk about is to focus on the outreach efforts and the utilization efforts. Julie, are people using this to the full extent possible?

*WILEN:* Absolutely not. A nonprofit tax preparation agency that we work with did a study in this outreach effort. They found that as many as 25% of all families eligible for the EITC have failed to apply for the credit. It's usually because people don't know about the credit or don't know how to apply because tax laws are so complicated. With EITC you have to actually get a separate schedule. So you can't do it through the 1040EZ. It is confusing and people haven't really heard about it. So absolutely, it's very underutilized.

*KYLE:* Do you have any sense of how underutilized? Is it half the people, 10% of the people?

*WILEN:* I think it's about 25% of all families who are eligible for it has failed to apply. Those are the kind of the numbers we hear about.

*KYLE:* Okay. Rosario, what about CHIP? How effectively are people who are eligible utilizing that?

*ROCCA:* People have been providing really good response to the CHIP program. As a matter of fact, we've enrolled already over 7,000 children as of March 16. So we've had a good turnout with the CHIP program. But again, that's got to do a lot with getting the community involved as well as the Mayor and community leaders.

*CHEATHAM:* I can answer on the national level about how CHIP is being used. There are approximately 10 million children in this country who are uninsured. And demographically, it breaks out to about 3.2 million are Latino and about 2.6 million are African-American. In the first three years of the State Children's Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP), states have signed up about 3.3 million kids. There are a lot of kids out there that are potentially eligible for Medicaid who aren't enrolled either. So part of the SCHIP story that we see from the federal government is while we estimate that there may be another two million or so who are eligible for the State Children's Health Insurance Programs, there are probably about four million or so who are eligible for Medicaid right now as the rules stand that aren't enrolled.

*KYLE:* In either EITC or in CHIP/Medicaid, do you have any sense of where these un-enrolled children are? Are they more likely to be in our bigger cities, medium cities, out in the countryside? Or are they just everywhere?

*CHEATHAM:* I have a little bit of work that's being done for me from the Census Bureau. They're pulling some data together. Initially, it looks like disproportionately rural kids are uninsured, which is something that you might not think of off the cuff. Especially in some major cities, the cities have really pulled together through their social networks to find the kids. But it looks like some of the rural kids are kind of being left behind.

*KYLE:* I think that's helpful, because I know that among the folks listening, there are people from much smaller cities than the ones represented here on the call, and I wanted them to understand how this does apply to them as well. Rosario, you started to talk about some of your successful outreach efforts, some of the things that you are doing to actually get those 7,000 kids enrolled. Tell us about some of the things you've done.

*ROCCA:* We've contacted the school districts when the program first started. We did about 3,000 copies of flyers and applications and we distributed them. We have two school districts -- Laredo Independent School District (ISD) and the United Independent School District (UISD). Both school districts got flyers and got applications. All the teachers and the administrators and nurses were trained and were given a briefing on the CHIP program and who would benefit from the CHIP program. And a lot of the students didn't have health insurance. A lot of teachers just went ahead and gave out flyers and applications. The applications went all over the places. We gave out to churches of all denominations, community service providers such as United Way agencies, and committees in schools. We just let the word out that CHIP is available to everybody.

*KYLE:* Has the City Health Department really been the leader in this? Have other people come to you to ask for it? Who are your best partners and how do those partnerships come about?

*ROCCA:* The Health Department itself was through the WIC [Women, Infants, and Children] program, the immunization program. There are some outreach workers with the WIC program, and they were going to different colonias and gave out flyers all over the place and made the families aware that this program is available to them. So the Health Department and the community service provider agencies have been a big instrument in helping us with the CHIP program.

*KYLE:* Julie, describe some of the outreach efforts you've taken with EITC.

*WILEN:* I'll go through a little bit of our outreach, but I want to say it with this caveat. I know there are a lot of listeners from smaller cities that go through this. I don't want to freak too many people out because we had a major mayoral push behind this initiative, so we really went all out for our first two years. This is a very new initiative for Chicago. But basically for Chicago, this campaign was kind of spearheaded by the Mayor's Office last year, and it came to the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development this year. The team is made up of high level staff in the Mayor's office, leaders of three of our top business groups, and two nonprofit tax preparation organizations. We really wanted to create an integrated public/private partnership, both from the business and the foundation communities and these nonprofit tax preparers.

We really used everything we could. We used radio, television, print media, a website, utility bill inserts, transit advertising, report cards, flyers, movie trailers, even grocery bags to spread the word about EITC. We kept the message, the graphics, and everything we used to spread the word very simple -- that the EITC means money in your pocket.

We started this outreach campaign, doing a lot of legwork in terms of the flyers and the paycheck stubs -- whatever we would use as the outreach message. We developed standard wording -- a description, and simple letters were distributed and a graphic identity was applied to the materials so people would know, "yes, this is the city's initiative. This is what it's about."

We started on the EITC outreach kickoff at a corporate breakfast that was sponsored by the Mayor in December. We involved the press at that point. We had stories in two of our major newspapers and articles in many of our community papers. In the month of December we really did a big push to the city's aldermen to have them spread the word, too. We enlisted the help of our sister agencies in putting the message on paycheck stubs, in newsletters, in writing letters, etc.

We targeted two groups of people: both the employers to help us spread the message to their employees and their consumers, and then also to the potential filers, either through the community based organizations that we work with, both, for their employees as well as their clients. We tried to make this very easy for people. So we gave community groups or employers information on the flyers or fact sheets. We put together massive packets. We did the sample paycheck stub message to people. We gave them articles or ideas for newsletters. We tried to make this as user friendly as possible.

Our second big push was in January where we had a community kickoff breakfast, again with the Mayor. This year we included the Governor also because we added a

state component since Illinois has a state version of EITC now. The campaign grew from there. We enlisted more corporate partners to use the paycheck stubs, to use video and audio messages, e-mails, newsletters, flyers, etc. We started a huge media push. It started in late January and February, after the distribution of W-2 forms. We had Public Service Announcements, radio, both talk shows and PSAs; we had articles in newspapers, ads in newspapers, press releases. We used a lot of different mediums to spread the message. Then, we tied the outreach to the faith-based organizations, community service organizations, aldermen, and local chambers of commerce. We tried to get in some new employers and sister agencies. Every avenue that we could tap into, given the staff that we have, we tried to push that way. That's what we're continuing to do now.

*KYLE:* Tina, you heard these descriptions of some outreach efforts in two particular locations. How does that sound in terms of the outreach efforts you've seen all across the country, regardless of which program? Are they tapping into some of the key ones, or do you have some additional ones, or ones that you are particularly fond of?

*CHEATHAM:* It does sound like both of these presenters are tapping into some key elements. One of the things that we can't overemphasize is the need for building partnerships and pooling resources. Everybody at the community level -- and we see this even in some of our federal agencies, whether you believe it or not -- have a need to serve similar populations on limited resources.

One of the things that we've seen that has been a particularly interesting model is that some mayors' offices have actually gotten behind children's health insurance and provided a space for outreach workers to work. One of them that comes to mind is just outside of Boston. The town of Everett, Massachusetts has an initiative called Health Care for All. It started with one schoolteacher being a champion for children's health insurance and the Mayor's office getting behind that concept. Everett, Massachusetts is going to be a place where kids have health insurance, and if they were eligible for publicly funded health insurance through CHIP or Medicaid, then they would work to sign those kids up. The Mayor's office provides the space for volunteers. It's just a small office, as I understand it, as well as a copying machine. Just some simple resources that really help local grassroots outreach work.

My agency is the agency that's kind of best known for funding community health centers and border health projects. There are community health centers in a lot of places in the country. If you have one near your city or town, I would encourage you to work with them to whatever extent possible because they have the same mission of signing kids up and connecting people to social services.

*KYLE:* You mentioned the mayor in Everett, Julie talked about the mayor leading the push in Chicago about EITC, and I know the Mayor of Laredo has been cooperative with the local Health Department. I think one of the questions on the line is how do I get my mayor to do this? What made the Mayor in Chicago decide to do this? Tina mentioned a little bit about one local activist in Everett helping to get the Mayor to move. What is the advice that any of the three of you can give about how to get the mayor or city council behind this or to lead this or to provide the little bit of support that was apparently necessary in a place like Everett? Or to do the massive kind of effort that occurs in a big city like Chicago? What advice do you have to our listeners about getting your mayor to do something about this?

*WILEN:* In Chicago, we have touted -- and it's very true -- that the EITC is a huge economic and workforce development tool, both for the individuals and for local economies. A figure that we cite is that in 1998, the EITC brought an estimated 1.2 billion into the Illinois economy. This is money that's spent in neighborhood stores, deposited into local banks, basically recycled through the region's economy. Our Mayor understands these issues, and he understands that the EITC provides financial incentive to work, it helps low-income individuals progress down the road to economic self-sufficiency. It's a big thing he talks about. It's really a win/win for everyone. It helps employees get the money that they deserve. The employers benefit because they're doing a good thing, and it's at no additional cost to them. In fact, something like the Advanced EITC, which is, instead of a lump sum at the end of the year, it's part of the EITC each month and in each paycheck. It actually gives employees a tax-free raise without adding to the employer's bottom line. It helps the city's business community because it brings millions of dollars back into the economy that is just re-circulated.

*KYLE:* Rosario, was it a hard sell to get the Mayor behind doing CHIP outreach? What hints can you give others about how to get the mayor or city council members more interested in this?

*ROCCA:* The Mayor has always been involved, especially with community issues here. She is always willing to help us. She has always backed up any community event. She was always out in the community helping. We have never had a problem in contacting her or asking her to do something for CHIP. She has always been willing -- more than willing to do it. She has always been out on the front line for us. So she has been a very big asset to the CHIP program in Laredo, as well as the city councilmen.

*KYLE:* What do you think, Rosario, the advantages of having increased enrollment in CHIP are in Laredo, or in other communities? Certainly there is going to be the advantage that basically children get some preventative services and get some healthcare when they need it. But beyond an individual child who gets either more or first access to healthcare, are there community benefits to having better healthcare among the kids?

*ROCCA:* They will be healthier and everybody will be happy and everybody will just be willing to do more for the community when families have some type of assistance, in this case, health insurance.

*CHEATHAM:* One of the things that has been really interesting to watch as CHIP has evolved is watching people work with legislators. And some of the arguments to state legislators are the same kinds of arguments that you might present to officials on the local level. Besides just asking officials to have their hearts in the right places as far as kids' health is concerned, there are some real economic advantages to having kids with health insurance in your community.

First, healthcare is something that we all pay for, whether it's through health insurance or through uncompensated care. Communities pay for it one way or another. When I lived in Dallas, uninsured folks went to Parkland Hospital. That's just where they went, and we all paid for it through our local taxes through uncompensated care. I know that different communities have a different spin on that, but that's one point.

Another one is an economic factor. Parents who have health insurance have healthier kids and miss fewer days of work because they're staying home with sick kids. It's kind of a little bit of what Julie was talking about with the Earned Income Tax Credit.

The third factor that really resonated with a lot of state legislators, and I think would resonate in cities and in towns that are linked to running the independent school district. I know that that's different in different places. But one of the things that's a really strong argument to make is that if you have kids that don't have health insurance, they're missing more school days. And the more school days that kids miss, the more dollars from the department of education that your school district loses. Uninsured kids equal lost education dollars.

*KYLE:* So we're hearing that therefore there are dollar in your pocket kind of advantages, both to families and to communities, and especially to EITC. There are dollars in your pocket from CHIP as well because parents may miss less work and therefore not miss out on their hourly wages or salaries. The cost of running public health facilities would be lessened because they would not have uncompensated care. They would have healthier kids to begin with because they would have gotten preventive care. I like also where Rosario was going with the whole happier, healthier communities and families -- a community building effort. That's one of the things that we see in our work at the National League of Cities -- that municipal officials are most interested in having neighborhoods and communities that are strong, happy, healthy. Literal physical health of its kids is one way to get there. Economic health of its families through EITC is another way to get there. So, I think there's a thread here that I'm seeing.

A couple of you have mentioned partnerships through schools. I want to ask a little bit more specifically about that and how that's worked. Rosario in particular mentioned early on lots of materials that went with the schools. For any of you, is that something you see as working well? Are schools resistant to moving way from an educational mission and doing this kind of outreach for these kinds of programs? Or do you think they're helpful to you? How have you made them be helpful? How have you helped them be helpful partners?

*WILEN:* The Chicago Public Schools as well as the City Colleges of Chicago have been integral partners. I'm glad you mentioned that, because it was something I had forgotten to bring up. Both were very interested in jumping on the bandwagon right away and participating as much as possible. The Chicago Public Schools helped us with quite a few mailings. We sent out letters in the report cards for kids both in December and in the beginning of April. They sent a letter to all their teachers and employees, and sent out letters to parents separate from the report card stuffers.

The City Colleges of Chicago have targeted all their students in a variety of different fields and programs as well as all their employees. They have sent massive e-mails and letters. They have these cool little bill stuffers that they've inserted with their registration information. They have done paycheck messages. They've really gone all out. Actually, when we first met with them, they said not only were they going to do all this, but also wanted to try to figure out how to do Advanced EITC for people interested in that. [For more information about the Advanced EITC, go to: <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96515,00.html> - QA1]. They have been a great support and have definitely jumped at it.

*KYLE:* Rosario, do you want to add anything to what you've said about your using the schools with massive distribution of materials?

*ROCCA:* I think the schools are a good source of knowing who needs what. The nurses there are on the front lines with those children, and they're the ones often to know the children that need health insurance. In this case, we have a situation where families can go into Mexico and get medical assistance over there, where now these families can afford insurance so they can have medical facilities here in the United States. I think the school districts do a lot for the CHIP program because they're on the front lines, and they know who needs what.

*WILEN:* Tina brought up a very good point about partnerships. Another avenue we've really pursued and has been great for us has been public libraries. Partnerships are really the key to this outreach. And Tina brought up a great point that actually we have not done in Chicago, which is the health centers. We have met with the Chicago Department of Public Health, but we did not really do as much outreach or be as helpful as we could have been to the health centers. To me, the CHIP program and the EITC are so related. When we think of the eligible individuals, we're talking about the same population. I think that's definitely one avenue that we should pursue here in Chicago for next year. You're talking about the same population and I would hate to miss that opportunity.

*KYLE:* I'm glad that you brought up the libraries because the next place I wanted to think about after talking about schools was what about other kinds of city departments -- the recreation departments, the employment or housing authorities that exist in communities? Have you seen that these are effective parts of the way of connecting outreach so that the listeners approaching people in their particular municipal government can hear how they can go at it? What about recreation? What about housing? What about employment departments in Laredo, or Tina, that you've seen in cities across the country?

*ROCCA:* For Laredo we've gotten everybody involved. The Laredo Housing Authority has distributed flyers and reading material on CHIP. They have applications available at their local offices, and therefore anybody can go and pick up one and come back to the Health Department. We provide the services where anybody can come in between the hours of eight to five. Then, we have two days out of the week where we work non-traditional hours, and we stay until seven, and that makes it available for anybody that needs to come in after five. We're available to the people, and we can help them with the application process or any information they need about the CHIP program.

*CHEATHAM:* Back on schools, we've seen a number of different strategies for school-based outreach being used throughout the country. In a small, small school district in Vermont, they've added an extra question for the school nurse to ask on the emergency card: "Does this child have health insurance?" This is something that schools are sometimes required to ask, like for sports. But once they collect that information, the school nurse actually follows up with the family and approaches them about Vermont's program, which is called "Dr. Dinosaur." Other school districts use school lunch applications. There are some new regulations that came out as a result of the 2000 farm bill that makes it just a little bit easier to share data between school lunch programs and publicly funded health insurance programs for kids. Some states, communities, and independent school districts have linked up to use a box on the school lunch application form to help the families get enrolled in health insurance.

*KYLE:* Are there other examples where there have been some either cross registration or at least cross fertilization when one is applying for EITC, that they're saying "It looks like you might be eligible for CHIP. Why don't you do that?" Somebody is applying for CHIP and they say, "It looks like you might be eligible for food stamps." Can you tell them how to do that? Have you seen any examples of that, either in the specific cities represented here, or Tina, in cities you know about?

*WILEN:* For Chicago I haven't seen as much. It's a little different because for EITC most of that is either done by the nonprofit tax preparers that the city and state foundations fund or at commercial sites that we don't necessarily know about. So, I don't know if that information is necessarily available at the sites. However, whenever we do most of these presentations, we often partner with different organizations to make sure that that information is distributed to the appropriate organization. It's "Kid Care" here in Illinois.

*CHEATHAM:* At the federal level, we partnered with one of those major commercial tax-assisters, H&R Block, who tells us that they see about four million families a year who qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit. We partnered with them on their software this year, so that as they're preparing families taxes, if it looks like the family would be eligible for CHIP, then the family will get an extra flyer that says, "Just for you." It basically has a little public service announcement that encourages families to call and find out more about their state health insurance program. We do run a national phone line that connects back to each state program. So that's how we're able at the national level to partner with a national organization. That number is 1-877-KIDSNOW. If Julie were to call it, she would get Chicago's Kid Care program. And if Rosario were to call it, she would connect with the folks at Tex Care partnership. Wherever you are in the country, it connects to your state's program. So H&R Block is working with us this year to help connect families that are eligible for Earned Income Tax Credit with their state's child health insurance program.

*WILEN:* Tina, does that filter down to all the different states or to local levels?

*CHEATHAM:* I don't know that. H&R Block put out a press release last week about that activity. I don't know how widespread that was.

*WILEN:* Wow, that is great.

*CHEATHAM:* They did this as part of their corporate citizen partnership. They did this completely for free. They programmed their software with the CHIP eligibility limit in mind, and it's going forward.

*KYLE:* Rosario, any partnerships that you see in Texas, either with people with EITC or food stamps connecting with the CHIP outreach? And also, Tina began mentioning state level efforts. Any connections with CHIP outreach across Texas state outreach efforts that are helpful so that other listeners ought to think about what's going on at the state level in their state? Is that a good resource?

*ROCCA:* It is very good. The BHS [Behavioral Health Services] workers automatically do a referral to CHIP once they deny a case because of the resources or assets. So, all the families who have been denied Medicaid because of their assets, citizenship, or resources, automatically get CHIP, being that they qualify for CHIP and they make the CHIP guidelines. That's at the state level. So I think that's wonderful there. Now a family is not being left out. Now they have an option where they want to take this health insurance. If they don't want to, it's up to them whether they want to sign up for the program or not. Other than that, H&R Block is also doing a lot for the CHIP program.

*KYLE:* So in addition to the kind of particular outreach activities that you've all been talking about, you've also been talking about relationships between organizations and policy level activities like automatic referrals, software adaptations, things that listeners ought to think about advocating for in their communities. If you've got an outreach campaign, these might be ways to enhance or modify it.

*ROCCA:* Yes, and through our local Medicaid office, they've been wonderful. A family that is not qualified for Medicaid because of the situation that they're in, they can come back to the CHIP program automatically. They just get the enrollment package and sign up for the program.

*KYLE:* I wanted to know what kind of federal support there is for these outreach campaigns. Have you in Chicago or Laredo been able to access any support from the federal government? I know that there are some grants or resources available. Have you been able to make use of them?

*WILEN:* We have minimally, I guess. We've looked at the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities [in Washington, DC], and they have been a great help in putting together some of the EITC information and just being a great resource for us. [Go to: <http://www.cbpp.org/> or call: 202-408-1080]. We had a speaker at our corporate kickoff breakfast that spoke about the importance of the EITC so that the corporate leaders really understood it in terms of the economic benefits. He was very complimentary of Chicago's outreach effort, which I think is always nice for the Mayor to hear. Our mayor's office may be doing more with the federal end of things. But that has been my involvement so far.

*KYLE:* Rosario, you talked about having good partnerships in the state. What about federal support or resources?

*ROCCA:* They have been very minimal for us. It's probably more in our offices here. We got some assistance from them, but it's been very minimal for us, too.

*KYLE:* Tina, what kinds of resources in terms of CHIP outreach can somebody wanting to start something up in a community access? Do they access it through their state? Do they access it through the community health centers that you mentioned earlier?

*CHEATHAM:* It's mostly yes to all of your questions there. Basically the majority of money for CHIP is set up in an allotment for the state CHIP agency [SCHIP agency], whatever that may be

called in your state. The state can spend up to 10% of their allotment from the federal government on outreach activities. The way that's trickled down in a lot of states is that the states, such as Texas and Illinois, have mini community-based grants that are let from the state level. Generally, 70 cents on the dollar of that is federal money that's going through those community grants. So there may be an opportunity to tap into some state RFP [Request for Proposal] process for community-based grants if your state is one of those states.

There are some resources that my agency -- the Health Resources and Services Administration -- provides to our normal grantees of safety net providers through grant processes. It wouldn't necessarily be the City of Laredo that could apply, but maybe it would be the Maternal and Child Health Program or the Healthy Start Program in Laredo could work with the city to apply for a given grant.

Just to give you an idea of some of those grants, our largest grant is an outreach and enrollment grant that my agency gives for outreach. There's an outreach and enrollment grant through state primary care associations, which are the associations that link together community health centers. That's about a three and a half million dollar a year commitment that we have to supporting community health center outreach. In different states there are different projects at the community level that are going on. In addition, we've had some rural health outreach grants, specifically looking at the needs in rural communities, and have worked into some of our other safety net grant cycles, an element that would award grant money for SCHIP outreach.

Then, just to round out what's happening at the national level, this isn't the federal government. But if the listeners aren't connected, I would do a disservice to not mention that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has a significant involvement in SCHIP and commitment to SCHIP outreach and CHIP outreach through their Covering Kids project. You can find out more about your state's Covering Kids project, including the communities that are involved in it, on their website, which is <http://www.coveringkids.org/>. That's about a \$47 million commitment that Robert Wood Johnson has to outreach and enrollment in SCHIP and Medicaid.

*KYLE:* One of the things that I wanted to ask about was reaching special populations. Are there really hard to reach folks that you want to get at that you either have had successes with or can alert us to? I'm not sure what it is with EITC or with CHIP either. But are there special populations that you are always trying to reach that are always a struggle to try and get them to have the information that you want them to have?

*WILEN:* For EITC, nothing really springs to mind. We have not really targeted any specific population for this.

*CHEATHAM:* There are a couple of different populations that we're hearing that state agencies are having trouble reaching, and one of them is adolescents. We've tried to tailor where some of that money goes. I was talking about grants to primary care associations. One of the projects to help reach adolescents in Connecticut actually went to a school district and had kids help develop the material that spoke to kids. They run them [public service announcements] on closed circuit TV before school starts every day.

By looking at the demographics during the whole life of CHIP over the past three years, it looks like states aren't doing a particularly great job of signing up Latino kids.

*KYLE:* Rosario, Tina was mentioning that some of the figures she sees nationally show that Latino children might be among some of the harder to reach children. Partly because their families may be concerned that immigration status will be affected if they apply for a public program, and that's something some communities are trying to overcome.

*ROCCA:* Right.

*KYLE:* You mentioned yourself about families who sometimes went over the border to secure health services rather than trying to get them in their own neighborhoods. What are you doing to help figure that out?

*ROCCA:* When they come into our office, we explain the entire program to them. If they ask if their immigration status will have anything to do with it, we'll just say no. As long as the child is a U.S. born or resident alien, the family can go ahead and apply for CHIP. It doesn't matter what the citizenship of the parent is, as long as the child is either a U.S. citizen or a resident alien.

We've had a lot of concerns, especially with parents that don't meet Medicaid qualifications, that it will affect their immigration status. Also, they're afraid that as a result of asking for services that they won't get legal status in the United States.

*KYLE:* One of the special efforts you've had to make is to alleviate their concern that these programs are not going to have an effect on that.

*ROCCA:* Right. We go to PTC [parent-teacher] meetings, we do presentations, we go to private businesses and tell them about CHIP and what CHIP is doing for the community here in Laredo.

*KYLE:* One of the questions that we got from a listener in Santa Barbara, California, is about the cost of outreach activities. Who is actually paying for this? Maybe we can be more specific here about who is paying for the outreach efforts in Laredo or Chicago, or Tina, in other communities that you know about. Did Chicago or Laredo get a particular state or federal grant to do this? Or, is it coming from general purpose local dollars? Is there any private funding available for this? Where would you suggest somebody go to get dollars to pay for outreach activities?

*WILEN:* In Chicago, the EITC has a budget that comes from the general revenue from the city, and from corporate dollars of about \$200,000. Now that does not include moneys that we get from corporations. We usually get between five and ten thousand dollars from eight to ten corporations to pay for the media costs, advertising, outreach publicity efforts. Also, we fund the two nonprofit tax preparers that we use -- the Tax Counseling Project and the Tax Assistance Program in Chicago -- through different dollars at the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development. That helps them to operate the tax preparation sites during tax season as well through other activities during the year. I know that those two tax preparers also get money from the state and from foundations. So, that's basically the bulk of our budget.

*KYLE:* In Laredo, when you have these materials to schools and housing effort and so forth, who's paying for those? Where are you getting the funds to support that effort?

*ROCCA:* State funded program.

*KYLE:* Tina, what examples do you know about? What kinds of dollars are people using to support their efforts?

*CHEATHAM:* For the most part, I would say they're being funded through state CHIP agencies. The bulk of communities use some of those mini-outreach grants, at least the ones that I know about. For the caller from Santa Barbara, they have an additional resource available to them on the West Coast. As I understand it, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation has been very generous in supporting outreach to communities on the West Coast. [<http://www.packard.org/> or 650-948-7658]. I would definitely encourage you to contact the Packard Foundation if you have some ideas of what you'd like to do in your city.

In the city of Austin, there was some help from Dell Computers. So there may be local foundations or local businesses that would be willing to help.

*KYLE:* It certainly seems like from some of the outcomes that you all have described that employers would be interested in CHIP outreach because it might be helpful to them as an employer and, therefore, they might be willing to support outreach efforts. They would get a return by having their workers more readily available to work and not be missing work because of their children's ill health. Some of the other folks who are interested in a healthier economy locally might be interested in the EITC outreach so that those dollars are available to be spent in the local economy rather than just lost and never coming there. So, I think we can be creative in our communities in terms of which corporations or which companies or which local foundations might be interested in supporting outreach. Because there would be not just a charitable purpose of helping the children and families affected, but a much larger community outcome that they would get credit for helping to support.

*WILEN:* I just wanted to add one more point, too. I'm sure it's this way for many cities, but in Chicago, job retention is always an issue. EITC is such a great tool for employers because it is so easy, and everyone likes to be the bearer of good news. To me it's just an easy pick for employers to say, "Here, look at the additional money that I'm letting you know that you are eligible for." I really do think it makes individuals happy with their employer. I think it's an easy tool for an employer to use.

*CHEATHAM:* I thought of an additional funding source for CHIP that I know some communities have tapped into. If you're in a place large enough to have a hospital association, you could partner with them; they seem to have had resources to give to community projects. The American Hospital Association that most state and local hospital associations are a part of has an entire campaign for coverage. [Go to: [http://www.hospitalconnect.com/aha/key\\_issues/coverage/index.html](http://www.hospitalconnect.com/aha/key_issues/coverage/index.html), or call 312-422-3000 and <http://coveringtheuninsured.org/>, or call 202-572-2928.] It's part of their national mission. We've seen that trickle down into communities.

*KYLE:* I want to give the three of you a chance to reflect on whether there's another point that you want us to hear before we finish.

We're obviously connected to and concerned about what municipal officials are doing. If you could convince city leaders to do one thing, what would it be? If there were something you could get the mayor or councilmember or the head of a city agency to do, what would that be? Whether that is a new effort or a reinvented effort? Where do you want to put your next effort, either in your city or generally? So that my listeners perhaps can think about if they're going to do one thing in their town, what is it that they're going to do?

*WILEN:* One thing that I would really like to see happen, and I think Tina hit on this a little bit, is to figure out a way where a large number of this targeted population come together. Or make something accessible to them where we could figure out what benefits people are eligible for so that they don't miss out, whether it be EITC, food stamps, Kid Care, or CHIP. I think this conference call has been a great example of this: we may try to target EITC over here, but those exact same people have so many other benefits they may be eligible for that they're not receiving because they don't know about them. I think that is whether it be some kind of screening tool or a cross-informational something or other. But I think that is such an important thing, to make sure the people really are getting all the benefits that they should be.

*KYLE:* I was reminded of something that's going on in Baltimore called "City Stat." They are trying to track all kinds of information by census district and other kinds of divisions within the city. They might include what's happening to kids, CHIP eligibility, EITC usage, criminal behavior, and by combining all of that, they might better understand what's going on in the city, district by district, tract by tract. I think what you're mentioning is a similar kind of effort to try and assess where we are. Rosario, if you could get city officials in Laredo to do one more thing, or if a neighboring town were asking what's the place we should start, what's the most important thing you would want to get at?

*ROCCA:* Getting the leaders, getting to know the community, knowing what these people need and what's out there. I know the community, I know who to contact. But yet I know a lot of the people are being left out. I don't know why, but I guess it's just getting out into the community and getting leaders to get out there and know the community needs and asking on a one-to-one basis. Just go out there and know what these people need.

*KYLE:* So another emphasis on getting a needs assessment underway and then a lot of one-on-one communication about how important it is. Tina, do you have a last thought on this area, what you from the federal level want more local officials to do?

*CHEATHAM:* I think the other two presenters hit the nail on the head as far as building partnerships and seeing exactly where your community is and what the barriers are, because these programs, especially Medicaid and EITC, have been around for a while. Why aren't communities taking it up? Is it a problem of not knowing? Is it other barriers? So really figuring that out as well as the partners who can help make it happen. And if I had one political chip -- no pun intended -- that I'd like to see in communities, is I'd really like to see school districts get involved in outreach and signing people up.

*WILEN:* I wanted people to be aware of two websites, in case people are interested in the EITC or interested in starting a program similar to what we've done in Chicago. If individuals want information just generally about the EITC and about Chicago's program, they could log onto <http://www.moneyinmypocket.com/>. If individuals are interested in actually starting an outreach campaign or seeing more specifically what we've done in Chicago, one of the foundations in Chicago helped up put together two tools that are just incredible. One is a starter kit and another is a brochure. And they can be downloaded from this website: <http://www.chicago-eitc.org/>.

*KYLE:* Rosario, any particular resource you want to point out before we close out the call?

*ROCCA:* Not at this time, John, but if you want to call me here at the Health Department, I'll be more than happy to answer any questions.

*KYLE:* Great. I want to thank you all for participating today, listeners and speakers alike. I think we covered a lot of ground.

I want to inform you that NLC has an action kit on helping working families. It is available to download at <http://www.nlc.org/iyef>, or leave a message at 202-626-3014 to request a copy by mail. We look forward to listening to you and working with you in the future.