



Resource Guide

Raising Hope

The Equal Voice Story



equal voice
for America's Families
MARGUERITE CASEY FOUNDATION

LATINO
PUBLIC
BROADCASTING



marguerite **casey** foundation
change is possible.™

ACTIVE **voice**®

Resources for *Raising Hope: The Equal Voice Story*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 **Introduction**

About *Raising Hope: The Equal Voice Story*

About the *Raising Hope* Community Engagement Campaign

How To Use This Resource Guide At A Community Event

4 **Myths and Facts About Low-Income Working Families**

5 **Discussion Questions**

7 **The Faces of America's Working Families**

Living Wages & Job Access

Immigration

Access to Quality Education

Health Care

14 **Make Your Voice Heard**

15 **Join the Movement for America's Working Families**

Voting and Civic Engagement

16 ***Raising Hope* Community Engagement Campaign Partners**

Introduction

ABOUT RAISING HOPE: THE EQUAL VOICE STORY

Raising Hope: The Equal Voice Story is an intimate portrait of inequality in the United States and tells the inspiring story of Equal Voice for America's Families, a family-led campaign to raise awareness of the issues affecting poor and working families across the country. Beginning with the stories of five households striving to lift themselves out of poverty, the film shows how over 30,000 low-income families came together in their cities and towns to create a national platform of policy solutions for America's families. *Raising Hope* shows how working families are uniting to take control over their futures and challenge America to live up to its promises of equality and opportunity for all.

***Raising Hope* will air on public television throughout 2010. Check your local listings for more information.**

ABOUT THE RAISING HOPE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

Led by Latino Public Broadcasting and the Marguerite Casey Foundation and in partnership with public television stations and community-based organizations around the country, the *Raising Hope* Community Engagement Campaign will include public television broadcasts, social media platforms and community screenings designed to highlight issues of local concern and engage new partners in the fight for fairness for America's working families. The Campaign is bringing this powerful documentary film to communities across the country to shed light on this historic family-led movement and inspire working families across the nation to get involved. As the economic crisis continues to threaten the stability of families struggling to make ends meet, the Campaign is using the film to raise awareness of the National Family Platform developed through the Equal Voice campaign and build the movement by helping families view themselves as guardians of their own future capable of influencing, contributing to and making a difference in public policy.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE GUIDE AT A COMMUNITY EVENT

Learn more and get the latest updates about the Campaign at <http://www.equalvoiceforfamilies.org/>.

This guide is designed to support discussions and community screenings of *Raising Hope: The Equal Voice Story*. The following pages focus on a few of the most important themes—immigration, living wages and job access, access to quality education and health care—and are designed to provide viewers with basic facts to put the issues in the film in context and encourage audiences to get involved. The policies highlighted on these pages represent just a few of the pieces of the National Family Platform developed by over 30,000 families over the course of the Equal Voice for America's Families campaign—you can view the full platform and connect to other working families across the country online at the Equal Voice website.

Sections of this guide can be printed as stand-alone fact sheets, and whether you are hosting a community screening or just watching the film with a few friends, we encourage you to choose the themes that are most relevant to you and to tailor your discussion to meet your group's objectives, needs and interests.

Myths and Facts About Low-Income Working Families

Low-income people across the country are working hard to provide for themselves and their families, hoping that they will have a chance to realize the American dream. But all too often, some of the most difficult work is also the least rewarded, and the children of low-income parents find themselves trapped in poverty because they have never been granted the opportunities they need to get ahead. The economic crisis has made it even more difficult for working families to get by, pushing many more people into financial instability or outright poverty. On top of this, as the recent health care debates have shown, many people are reluctant to extend government benefits to those most in need because working families are frequently caricatured as freeloaders, unfairly dismissed for relying on social services without making adequate contributions to society. Here are a few fast facts about working families to counter these misperceptions:¹

1. "Myths and Facts" from Brandon Roberts and Deborah Povich, *Still Working Hard, Still Falling Short: New Findings on the Challenges Confronting America's Working Families*, Working Poor Families Project, October 2008.

MYTH	FACT
Low-income families do not work.	72% of low-income families work.
Low-income families do not work hard.	The average annual work effort for low-income working families is 2,552 hours, roughly one and one-quarter full-time jobs.
Low-income working families are headed by single parents.	52% of low-income working families are headed by married couples.
Low-income working families are headed by immigrants.	69% of low-income working families have only American-born parents.
Low-income working families have very young parents.	89% of low-income working families have a parent between the ages of 25 and 54.
Low-income working families are overwhelmingly minority.	43% of low-income working families have white, non-Hispanic parents.
Low-income working families are dependent on public assistance.	25% of low-income working families receive food stamp assistance.

"I started working at my job seven years ago. I started out at 10 dollars an hour. And I still feel like I'm making 10 dollars an hour... because the cost of living has gone so high... I work as hard as I can, and it just feels like I'm not going anywhere."

- SINGLE MOM CHARMAINE PARKER, FRESNO, CA





Discussion Questions

- Share a moment in the film that struck you as surprising, true or untrue.
- Of the five families featured, which one did you relate to the most and why?
- Charmaine Parker shares that every 50-cent raise she receives barely keeps her family afloat due to rising costs of living. Do you think that economic mobility is more attainable to some but not others? If so, why?
- Leticia Treviño, mother of six and an undocumented immigrant, shared her hard work at home and in the workplace. Leticia says at one point, "You could say the government depends on me." What do you think about that statement? Does the United States depend on immigrants both legal and undocumented? If so, how?
- Brandon Mitchell, single father of four from New Orleans, compares the state of New Orleans after natural disaster to the state of America. Do you agree that there is a similarity between post-Katrina New Orleans and the well-being of America's families? If so, how? If not, why not?
- How do you think the media covers issues affecting poor families?
- Share an experience where you have been able to shape public policy that benefited you and your community.
- Do you feel like government listens to the voices of families when crafting policy? What is needed to ensure that policymakers consult families when shaping public policy that affects their lives?
- This documentary was filmed in 2008. What do you think has changed for America's families since then?

The Faces of America's Working Families: Living Wages & Job Access

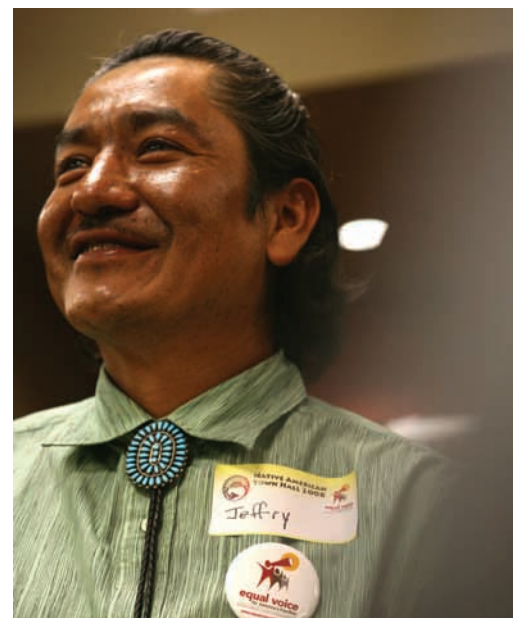
FAST FACTS

1. Marguerite Casey Foundation.
2. Ibid.
3. "The Employment Situation – May 2010." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 4, 2010. Online at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empisit.nr0.htm>.
4. Rivers, Kerri L. "Conditions of Low-Income Working Families." Working Poor Families Project, 2009. Online at <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/indicators.html>
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. "Poverty: 2007 and 2008 American Community Surveys," p.2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, September 2009. Online at <http://www.census.gov>.
8. "The Worst of Times: Children in Extreme Poverty in the South and Nation." Southern Education Foundation, June 15, 2010. Online at <http://www.sefatl.org/showTeaser.asp?did=642>. Authors cite the U.S. Census, 2008.
9. "The Worst of Times," Southern Education Foundation, June 15, 2010.
10. Poverty: 2007 and 2008 American Community Surveys," p.2. U.S. Bureau of the Census, September 2009.
11. "Income, Earnings, and Poverty Data from the 2007 American Community Survey," p.9. U.S. Bureau of the Census, August 2008. Online at <http://www.census.gov>.

- 46% of the Equal Voice participants made less than \$25,000 annually.¹
- In the past year, 75% of Equal Voice participants reported that their families' economic situation either had not changed, had gotten worse or had gotten much worse.²
- As of May 2010, the unemployment rate in the U.S. was about 9.7%. Of the unemployed, almost half had been out of work for more than six months. And this doesn't include over one million people who wanted and were looking for work in the last year, but who have given up because they feel that no jobs are available.³
- The problem isn't just a lack of jobs – many working families are not making enough to meet their families' basic needs. In 2007, almost half of families living in poverty were working.⁴ Almost one-quarter of adult workers were in low-wage jobs,⁵ and nearly one-third of Hispanic workers and workers of color were in such jobs.⁶
- In 2008, an estimated 13.2% of the U.S. population had income below the poverty threshold,⁷ and about 5.7 million children lived in extreme poverty.⁸ The recent recession has expanded the number of extremely poor children nationwide by an estimated 1.5 million, and the rise of hardship and poverty for children is likely to continue, especially in the Southern and Western states.⁹
- The economic crisis has pushed many more people into poverty. From 2007 to 2008, the estimated number of people in poverty increased by 1.1 million, for a total of 39.1 million.¹⁰
- The median income for many people of color remains far below that of whites. In 2007, the median income for non-Hispanic white households was about \$15,000 per year more than that of other Hispanic households, and \$20,000 per year more than the median income for black or Native American households.¹¹

"I struggle on a day-to-day basis to find a construction job... and with today's economy and the housing problems that we're having... it really slows down the business that I'm in...."

JEFF CHALAN, COCHITI PUEBLO, NM



POLICY CHANGES AMERICA'S FAMILIES NEED

- **Increase outreach to low-income communities** for job training and education programs.
- **Pass living wage laws** to ensure that working people make enough to support their families.
- **Promote local hiring and workforce development** in communities with the greatest need.

GET INVOLVED

- National organizations like **Jobs With Justice**^{12*} and **Let Justice Roll**^{13*} are fighting for a better future for workers around the country. And the **Corporation for Enterprise Development**¹⁴ is one of many nonprofits dedicated to expanding economic opportunity for low-income families and communities.
- Look for local **unions, community organizations and political groups** to join up with other families with similar concerns in your area.
- Keep up to date on the issues through **Equal Voice** (www.equalvoiceforfamilies.org), a new online publication dedicated to shedding light on the realities affecting low-income families.

LEARN MORE

Films

- ***Waging a Living*** (dir. Roger Weisberg, 2006) profiles four very different Americans who work full-time but still can't make ends meet. Purchase the video or request a free copy for a community screening through the PBS website.¹⁵
- ***Living With A Hole in Your Pocket*** (prod. Northwest Area Foundation and Twin Cities Public Television, 2008) examines the policies and practices that make it difficult for people working one or more jobs to build the assets needed to get out and stay out of poverty. Stream the film online¹⁶ or request a free copy from the Northwest Area Foundation.¹⁷

Books

- ***Class Matters***. New York Times Company, 2005. A team of reporters explores the ways in which class—defined as a combination of income, education, wealth and occupation— influences destiny in a society that likes to think of itself as a land of opportunity.
- ***Ehrenreich, Barbara. Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America***. Holt Paperbacks, 2008. A revelatory firsthand account of life in low-wage America, this is the story of Ehrenreich's attempts to eke out a living while working as a waitress, hotel maid, house cleaner, nursing-home aide and Wal-Mart associate.
- ***Ehrenreich, Barbara. This Land is Their Land: Reports From a Divided Nation***. Holt Paperbacks, 2009. A collection of essays on America's haves and have-nots.
- ***Newman, Katherine. No Shame in My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City***. Vintage Books, 2000. A study of low-wage fast-food industry employees in Harlem struggling to make it despite little hope for advancement.
- ***Shipler, David K. The Working Poor: Invisible in America***. Vintage Books, 2005. An intimate portrait of Americans struggling to survive and escape poverty and the social systems that have failed them.

12. www.jwj.org/

13. <http://letjusticeroll.org/>

14. <http://cfed.org>

15. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/waging-a-living/>

16. http://www.mnchannel.org/video_archive.php?video_id=13

17. <http://toolbox.nwaf.org/>

* Site also available in Spanish / en español.

The Faces of America's Working Families: Immigration

1. "Fact Sheet: Immigrants' Economic Contributions." The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, 2009. Online at <http://drummajorinstitute.org/library/report.php?ID=104>. Authors cite White House Council of Economic Advisors, "Immigration's Economic Impact" (2007).
2. "The Foreign-Born Labor Force in the United States: 2007," p.3. U.S. Bureau of the Census, December 2009.
3. Capps, Randolph, et al. "A Profile of the Low-Wage Immigrant Workforce." The Urban Institute, October 27, 2003. Online at <http://www.urban.org/publications/310880.html>.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. "Fact Sheet: The Exploitation of Undocumented Workers." The Drum Major Institute for Public Policy, 2009. Online at <http://www.drummajorinstitute.org/library/report.php?ID=105>.
7. Ajay Chaudry et al. "Facing Our Future: Children in the Aftermath of Immigration Enforcement." Urban Institute, 2010. Online at http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412020_FacingOurFuture_final.pdf.
8. Visit <http://www.aclu.org/what-happens-arizona-stops-arizona> for more information.
9. "Immigration Reform." Equal Voice Newspaper. Online at http://www.equalvoiceforfamilies.org/pages/issues/immigrant_reform.html.

FAST FACTS

- U.S. natives gain an estimated \$37 billion a year from immigrants' participation in the U.S. economy.¹
- There are more foreign-born workers in the U.S. today than ever before—almost 24 million, or 16% of the labor force.²
- Immigrants make up a disproportionate share of low-wage workers.³ Immigrants' hourly wages are lower on average than those for native-born Americans, and nearly half earn less than 200% of the minimum wage—versus one-third of native workers.⁴
- Foreign-born women earn substantially lower wages than either foreign-born men or native women.⁵
- The threat of deportation makes it difficult for workers who are undocumented to fight for their rights, worsening wages and working conditions for everyone.⁶
- Barriers created by the application process often separate siblings, spouses and parents from their children for years.
- An estimated 5.5 million children in the U.S.—about three-quarters of whom are citizens—have unauthorized immigrant parents. When a working parent is arrested, detained and/or deported, families lose crucial financial and emotional support and often face housing loss, hunger and other hardships.⁷

POLICY CHANGES AMERICA'S FAMILIES NEED

- **Tell your local police department to leave immigration status checks to the feds.** This is the best way to ensure that everyone will feel safe going to the police.
- **End racial profiling.** Statutes like SB 1070 in Arizona, which requires police officers to ask people for their immigration papers based only on "reasonable suspicion," encourage harassment of documented and undocumented immigrants, legal permanent residents and American citizens.⁸
- **Increase funding for adult education and job training programs.** Programs for adult education, English as a Second Language (ESL) and more specialized skills can help workers get better jobs, train for emerging industries and qualify for higher education.
- **Strengthen pathways to citizenship.** As many as 12 million undocumented immigrants live and work in the United States, and some, like Leti, have lived here for many years. Urge the creation of a path to citizenship that would help keep track of who is in the country, ensure that immigrants are protected by the same labor laws that protect citizens, enable families to be reunited and allow immigrants to contribute fully to our communities and the nation.⁹

"I always say, 'I came to this country to work, and I am here working.' I don't depend on the government. Maybe you could say the government depends on me."

LETICIA TREVIÑO, MOTHER OF 6 AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNER IN BROWNSVILLE, TX





GET INVOLVED

- Visit the website of the **National Council of La Raza**^{10*} to learn more about Comprehensive Immigration Reform.
- Join **The Campaign To Reform Immigration for America**^{11*}, a united national effort bringing together individuals and grassroots organizations with the mission to build support for workable comprehensive immigration reform. Visit their website to learn more, or text **JUSTICE** (or **JUSTICIA** for Spanish) to **69866** to receive action alerts and updates.
- Join or start a branch of the **Restaurant Opportunity Centers United**.¹² ROC-United is a national organization that provides training and support for restaurant workers organizing projects and engages in policy work to improve conditions for these workers. Call 212-243-6900 to find out more.
- If your employer has violated your rights, the **ACLU Immigrants' Rights Project**,¹³ the **Mexican-American Legal Defense & Education Fund**¹⁴ or **LatinoJustice PRLDEF**¹⁵ might be able to help.

LEARN MORE

Films

- **Farmingville** (dir. Catherine Tambini and Carlos Sandoval, 2004) blends the stories of town leaders, residents, day laborers and activists on all sides of the immigration debate. Purchase a copy of this Sundance award winner on the filmmakers' website,¹⁶ then download a free discussion guide to support a community screening.¹⁷
- **Made In L.A. / Hecho en Los Angeles** (dir. Almudena Carracedo & Robert Bahar, 2007) is an Emmy Award-winning documentary that follows three Latina immigrants in sweatshops as they embark on an odyssey to win basic labor protections from a trendy clothing retailer. Learn more on the film's website,¹⁸ or request a free copy for a community screening from PBS's P.O.V.¹⁹
- **The New Americans** (prod. Kartemquin Films, 2004) follows a diverse group of immigrants and refugees as they journey to start new lives in America. Purchase this groundbreaking series²⁰ or themed modules and discussion guides for workplaces, schools and community organizations.²¹

Books

- **Sen, Rinku, with Fekkek Mamdouh. *The Accidental American: Immigration and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization***. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008. The story of one restaurant worker and his colleagues' struggle for just treatment and an argument for new immigration policies that would allow everyone to fully share the benefits of globalization.
- **Thompson, Gabriel. *Working in the Shadows: a Year of Doing the Jobs (Most) Americans Won't Do***. Nation Books, 2010. A journalist spends a year working alongside undocumented immigrants in some of America's most difficult and least rewarding jobs.

10. <http://www.nclr.org/>

11. <http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/>

12. <http://www.rocunited.org/>

13. <http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights>

14. <http://www.maldef.org/>

15. <http://latinojustice.org/>

16. <http://www.farmingvillethemovie.com/>

17. <http://activevoice.net/farmingville.html>

18. <http://www.madeinla.com/>

19. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/madeinla/>

20. <http://kartemquin.com/films/the-new-americans>

21. http://activevoice.net/new_americans_mods.html

* Site also available in Spanish / en español.

The Faces of America's Working Families: Access to Quality Education

FAST FACTS

1. "Special Analysis 2010: High-Poverty Public Schools." National Center for Education Statistics. Online at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/analysis/index.asp>.

2. Ibid.

3. "The Worst of Times: Children in Extreme Poverty in the South and Nation," p.16-17. Southern Education Foundation, June 15, 2010.

4. "The Economic Benefits of Reducing the Dropout Rate in the Nation's Largest Metropolitan Areas." Alliance for Excellent Education, January 2010. Online at http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/EconMSA.

5. Swanson, Christopher. "U.S. Graduation Rate Continues Decline." *Education Week*, June 2, 2010. Online at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/06/10/34swanson.h29.html>.

6. Ibid.

7. "The Economic Benefits of Reducing the Dropout Rate in the Nation's Largest Metropolitan Areas." Alliance for Excellent Education, January 2010.

8. "Rising College Costs: A Federal Role?" *The New York Times*, February 3, 2010. Online at <http://roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/03/rising-college-costs-a-federal-role/>.

- The number of high-poverty public schools (where more than three-quarters of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals) is growing, from 12% in 1999-2000 to 17% in 2007-2008.¹
- Hispanics and youth of color make up a disproportionately large share of students in these schools, with white students comprising just 14% of students in high-poverty elementary schools.²
- School funding is least in districts with the greatest share of students in extreme poverty. The most recent funding data show that the median per pupil expenditure in districts with 10% or more of children in extreme poverty was barely half the amount spent by districts with child poverty rates of less than 5%, and despite progressive federal funding, gaps in per-pupil spending were vast.³
- More than seven thousand students drop out every school day.⁴ Three out of every 10 members of this year's graduating class, 1.3 million students in all, will fail to graduate with a diploma.⁵
- Only 56% of Latinos successfully finish high school, while just 54% of African-Americans and 51% of Native Americans graduate.⁶
- Halving the number of drop-outs in the nation's 50 largest cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas could have enormous economic benefits, including an additional \$2.8 billion in spending and as much as \$10.5 billion in increased home sales.⁷
- Federal Pell Grants help millions of students every year cover the costs of college, but because college costs have risen more rapidly than grant levels, Pell grants cover a lower percentage of college costs than they did a decade ago.⁸

POLICY CHANGES AMERICA'S FAMILIES NEED

- **Promote community leadership in schools.** Parents and teachers must come together to work on the best education strategies for children.
- **Reduce class sizes** so teachers are better able to meet the needs of all students.
- **Enact funding reform** to provide adequate school funding regardless of property values.
- **Create "grow our own teacher" programs** to recruit and support parents and other stakeholders in communities of color to become fully certified teachers.
- **Strengthen college preparation programs, and financial support for college.**

"Last year, I actually dropped out of school. And that was one of the things I never thought would ever happen to me."

MARIA DEGILLO, CHICAGO, IL





GET INVOLVED

- **Join a local school board or Parent Teacher Association** to stay involved with important decisions in your child's school. Check out the Center for Public Education^{9*}, the National School Board Association¹⁰ or the Parent Teacher Association¹¹ for more information about the important role school boards and PTAs play.
- **Get the support your child needs to succeed.** Gear-Up¹² and TRIO¹³ provide federal funding to local organizations that help low-income students succeed in college. Many non-profits, including the Posse Foundation,¹⁴ Breakthrough Collaborative¹⁵ and Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools Program,¹⁶ offer free programs to help students succeed in school and go on to college.
- **Apply for a college scholarship.** Many organizations offer targeted scholarships that will cover part or all of a student's college tuition. Try the American Indian College Fund¹⁷, the United Negro College Fund¹⁸, the Hispanic College Fund¹⁹ or Latino College Dollars^{20*}, an online database of many scholarships specifically for Latino students.

LEARN MORE

Films

- **College IS Possible** (prod. TPT/MN Channel and Admission Possible) shows how programs, coaching and committed support can help low-income high school students pursue – and succeed in – college. Watch the film and download a discussion guide online.²¹
- **I Am A Promise: The Children of Stanton Elementary School** (dir. Susan Raymond, 1993) portrays children in an inner-city neighborhood where 90% of the students live in poverty. Purchase an individual copy of this Academy Award®-winning film through Amazon.com, or a copy for a high school, college or public library on the Transit Media website.²²
- **The Lottery** (dir. Madeleine Sackler, 2010) uncovers the failures of the traditional public school system and follows four families from Harlem and the Bronx who have entered their children in a charter school lottery. For more information or to pre-order a DVD, visit the filmmaker's website.²³
- **Waiting for "Superman"** (dir. Davis Guggenheim, 2010) views our nation's troubled public education system through the eyes of five promising students, exploring innovative education reformers and charter schools. The film will be in select cities as of 9/24/10; visit the official website²⁴ for a trailer or contact Paramount²⁵ for group sales information, advance screenings or to plan an event.

Books

- **Eaton, Susan. *The Children in Room E4: American Education on Trial*.** Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2007. A compelling look at school segregation in Hartford, Connecticut and a movement to ensure better opportunities for the district's children.
- **Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*.** Harper Perennial, 1992. A vivid account of the inequalities between low-income urban school districts and wealthier, predominantly white suburban districts around the country. Kozol also explains how public policies have created and help to perpetuate school inequality nationwide.
- **Kozol, Jonathan. *Shame Of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*.** Crown, 2005. An examination of the growing re-segregation and inequality of our nation's schools and the low-income children of color left behind.

9. <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org>

10. <http://www.nsba.org>

11. <http://www.pta.org>

12. <http://ed.gov/gearup>

13. <http://ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>

14. <http://www.possefoundation.org/>

15. <http://www.breakthroughcollaborative.org/>

16. <http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs-campaigns/freedom-schools/>

17. <http://www.collegefund.org/>

18. <http://www.uncf.org/>

19. <http://www.hispanicfund.org>

20. <http://www.latinocollegedollars.org/>

21. http://www.admissionpossible.org/College_IS_Possible_Documentary.html

22. <http://www.transitmedia.net/>

23. <http://thelotteryfilm.com/>

24. <http://www.waitingforsuperman.com/>

25. Call 877-GRP-7878 or visit <http://www.paramountdemo.com/wfsgroupsales/index.html>.

* Site also available in Spanish / en español.

The Faces of America's Working Families: Health Care

1. Mendes, Elizabeth. "More Americans Went Uninsured in 2009 Than in 2008." Gallup, January 8, 2010. Author cites the Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index. Online at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/124973/Americans-Went-Uninsured-2009-2008.aspx>.

2. The percentage and number of uninsured children in the United States are from the most recent year of data and represent coverage in 2008. Children's Defense Fund. Online at <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/data-uninsured-children-by-state.html>. See the site for CDF's sources; calculations by CDF.

3. Mendes, Elizabeth. "More Americans Went Uninsured in 2009 Than in 2008." Gallup, January 8, 2010.

4. "H.R. 4872, Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Final Health Care Legislation)." Congressional Budget Office, March 20, 2010. Online at <http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/113xx/doc11379/AmendReconProp.pdf>.

5. For more information, see Jeremy Binckes and Nick Wing's "Health Reform Bill Summary: The Top 18 Immediate Effects," online at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/03/22/health-reform-bill-summary_n_508315.html#s7514.

6. Pickert, Kate. "New Health-Reform Campaign Puts Democratic Candidates in a Tough Spot." Time, June 14, 2010. Online at <http://www.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1996363,00.html>.

7. "Kaiser Health Tracking Poll: May 2010." The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Public Opinion and Survey Research Program. Online at <http://www.kff.org/kaiserpolls/8075.cfm>.

FAST FACTS

- About one in six Americans lacked health insurance in 2009.¹
- More than eight million children in the U.S.—about one-tenth of the total—are uninsured.²
- Low-income people are among the most likely to be uninsured; almost 30% of those with incomes of less than \$36,000 are uninsured, compared to just 9.3% of those making between \$36,000 and \$90,000 annually.³
- In March 2010, President Barack Obama signed legislation to overhaul the nation's health care system and provide coverage to roughly 32 million people who currently lack it. But this will still leave about 23 million nonelderly adults without insurance as of 2019, about one-third of whom will be undocumented immigrants.⁴
- Though many of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act will not go into effect for several years, the legislation includes a number of immediate fixes. For example, insurance companies can no longer cut someone from coverage when he or she becomes sick,⁵ and the federal government is creating a temporary high-risk pool, administered by the states, to cover people with pre-existing medical conditions who have been uninsured for six months.
- Health reform remains a major issue in the fall 2010 midterm elections. Republicans in the House and Senate did not vote to support the Affordable Care Act, and many are painting it as an example of excessive government control and spending.⁶ Americans remain fairly divided on the issue, with 41% holding favorable views, 44% unfavorable views and 14% undecided or unsure.⁷

POLICY CHANGES AMERICA'S FAMILIES NEED

- **Extend community health benefits at local hospitals** by providing free or reduced-cost services, transportation services and improved translation and interpreter services.
- **Improve coverage for low-wealth families and immigrants**, who are among the most likely to remain uninsured even after the Affordable Care Act goes into effect.

"I was forced to declare bankruptcy... The doctor's bills got the best of me. I couldn't pay them... I had lost my MediCal because I had gotten a 50 cent raise... I had to start paying for my childcare, I had to start getting insurance myself...."

SINGLE MOM CHARMAINE PARKER, FRESNO, CA





GET INVOLVED

- **Educate yourself about the effect the Affordable Care Act** may have on you and your family. The official U.S. government website of the Affordable Care Act^{8*} and TIME Magazine's "Five Keys to Health Reform's Success or Failure"⁹ can help you understand what the new reforms will mean for you, when various provisions are set to go into effect and some of the challenges the new legislation presents.
- **Vote in the midterm elections** to ensure that candidates who support comprehensive coverage get and stay in office.¹⁰
- **Join the Universal Health Care Action Network**, a nationwide coalition that connects state health care advocacy groups with each other and with national organizations to build public and political support for affordable, quality health care for all.¹¹

LEARN MORE

Films

- **Sicko (dir. Michael Moore, 2007)**¹². A straight-from-the-heart comedic portrait of the crazy and sometimes cruel U.S. health care system, told from the vantage of everyday people faced with extraordinary and bizarre challenges in their quest for basic health coverage.
- **Unnatural Causes* (prod. Larry Adelman, 2008)** is a seven-part documentary series that tackles the root causes of our alarming socio-economic and racial inequities in health. Purchase a copy of the series and download a free discussion guide¹³ to get the conversation started in your community.
- **Critical Condition (dir. Roger Weisberg, 2008)** puts a human face on the nation's health care crisis by capturing the struggles of four critically ill Americans who discover that being uninsured can cost them their jobs, health, home, savings, even their lives. Download a discussion guide and purchase the film or request a free copy for a community screening through PBS's P.O.V.¹⁴

Books

- **Cohn, Jonathan. Sick: The Untold Story of America's Health Care Crisis—and the People Who Pay the Price.** Harper Perennial, 2008. Cohn, a senior editor at The New Republic, tells the stories of families with urgent health needs and describes how private insurers and employers deny coverage to cut costs.
- **Landmark: The Inside Story of America's New Health Care Law and What It Means for Us All.** PublicAffairs, 2010. The reporting staff of *The Washington Post* pierce through the confusion surrounding the historic overhaul of the health care system, examining the new law's likely impact on us all: families, doctors, hospitals, health care providers, insurers and other parts of a health care system that has grown to occupy one-sixth of the U.S. economy.
- **Reid, T.R. The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care.** Penguin Press, 2009. An exploration of health-care systems around the world that reveals the economic and individual health benefits of widespread coverage and refutes many of the arguments against the development of a universal healthcare system in the U.S.

8. <http://www.healthreform.gov/>

9. Online at <http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/completelist/0,29569,1975068,00.html>.

10. Visit CNN.com's Election Center on Health Care (<http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/05/31/issues.healthcare/index.html>) to learn more about the role health care reform may play in these elections.

11. Contact UHCAN Director Rachel DeGolia at 216.241.8422 x14 or degolia@uhcan.org for information about UHCAN's resources and listserv for national leaders, or visit <http://www.uhcan.org/>.

12. <http://sickthemovie.com/>

13. <http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/>

14. <http://www.pbs.org/pov/criticalcondition/>

* Site also available in Spanish / en español.

Make Your Voice Heard

Here are a few ways you can get involved and help build a better future for your family and community, whether the issue you care about most is living wages, job access, immigration, education, health care or something else altogether.

Register to vote. There's no better way to make your concerns heard than to participate in the political process. If you are a U.S. citizen 18 or over and haven't yet registered to vote, visit www.rockthevote.org or www.votesmart.org for registration instructions specific to your state. Many post offices also have voter registration forms you can fill out and mail on the spot. (But even if you aren't a citizen, there are still many other ways to get involved!)

Learn about the issues. Many major news organizations have special themed sections that provide general information and summaries about major issues of interest, as well as the latest news and developments. For example, the website of *The New York Times* includes sections on Immigration and Emigration, Health Care Reform and Housing, while CNN's website contains a special section on Student News¹. These sites can provide a good entry point if you're just starting to familiarize yourself with the issues. You can also visit the websites of organizations that focus on the topics of greatest interest to working families, some of which we've included at the end of this guide.

1. <http://www.cnn.com/studentnews/>



Vote in the mid-term elections. This fall, voters across the country will have the opportunity to change or maintain the balance of power in the Senate and House of Representatives, and voters in 37 states will also elect their Governors. You can find information about election dates, which races are contested, who the candidates are and what they think about the issues on comprehensive websites such as <http://www.cnn.com/POLITICS/election.2010/the.basics/>.

Join a movement. There's no better way to get the attention of elected officials and other key decision-makers than by joining forces with other like-minded people. Unions, church groups, school boards and local political parties are just a few examples of groups that can help you learn more about local issues of concern and how you can make a difference. Many of the national organizations listed at the end of this guide also have local chapters you can join, which can often link you up with great volunteer opportunities in your area.

Sign up to receive the Equal Voice Newspaper. Equal Voice is a new online publication dedicated to shedding light on the realities affecting low-income families. Published by the Marguerite Casey Foundation, Equal Voice offers original stories, profiles and photo essays that examine issues such as health care, affordable housing, education access and immigration reform and document the ways they intersect with the lives of working people. Keep up to date on the latest issues by signing up at www.equalvoiceforfamilies.org/.

Tune in to watch *Raising Hope: The Equal Voice Story* on your local PBS station – check local listings. You can also request a free copy of the DVD from the Marguerite Casey Foundation by visiting www.caseygrants.org or calling 206-691-3134.



Join the Movement for America's Working Families

The organizations below are just a few of the groups around the country working on issues of concern to working-class people and families. Check out their websites or look for local chapters to join, volunteer or get involved in other ways.

The Labor Project for Working Families¹ is a national non-profit organization that educates and empowers unions to organize, bargain and advocate for family-friendly workplaces.

The Low-Income Working Families Project² conducts research to identify the challenges that low-income families face and policy options that would promote meaningful work and positive outcomes.

The National Center for Children in Poverty³ is the nation's leading public policy center dedicated to promoting the economic security, health and well-being of America's low-income families and children.

National Low-Income Housing Coalition⁴ is dedicated to achieving socially just public policy that assures people with the lowest incomes in the United States have affordable and decent homes.

PolicyLink⁵ advances economic and social equity that connects the work of people on the ground to the creation of sustainable communities of opportunity that allow everyone, including low-income individuals and people of color, to participate and prosper.

Right to the City⁶ is a national alliance of racial, economic and environmental justice organizations and allies organizing to build a united response to gentrification and displacement in our nation's cities.

The Working Poor Families Project⁷ is a national initiative focused on state workforce development policies, including state policies and investments that critically affect the lives of working families.

1. <http://www.working-families.org/>
2. <http://www.urban.org/center/lwf/index.cfm>
3. <http://www.nccp.org/>
4. <http://www.nlihc.org/>
5. <http://www.policylink.org>
6. <http://www.righttothecity.org/>
7. <http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org/>
8. <http://democraciausa.org/>
9. <http://www.lvw.org/>
10. <http://www.votesmart.org/>
11. <http://www.svrep.org/>
12. http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/State_and_Territories.shtml
13. <http://www.workingfamiliesparty.org/>

* Site also available in Spanish / en español.

VOTING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Democracia USA^{8*} is a national, multi-year, non-partisan Hispanic voter registration, civic engagement and leadership development organization to increase the prominence and political participation of Latinos.

The League of Women Voters⁹ seeks to improve government systems and impact public policy through education and advocacy. Active in all 50 states, the League works locally, statewide and nationally.

Project Vote Smart¹⁰ is a nonpartisan volunteer-driven initiative that provides comprehensive information on political candidates, including voting records and issue positions and information about voter registration.

The Southwest Voter Registration Education Project¹¹ empowers Latinos and other minorities by increasing their participation in the American democratic process.

USA.gov, the U.S. government's official web portal, provides a comprehensive listing of government agencies and links to official state government websites.¹²

The Working Families Party¹³ is a coalition of community organizations, activists and labor unions, now active in six states, that fights to hold politicians accountable to working- and middle-class families.



Raising Hope Community Engagement Campaign Partners



Marguerite Casey Foundation exists to help low income families strengthen their voice and mobilize their communities in order to achieve a more just and equitable society for all. The foundation was created in 2001 to help expand Casey Family Program's outreach and further enhance its 43-year record of leadership in family well-being. The foundation envisions a just and equitable society for all, where all children are nurtured to become compassionate, responsible and self-reliant adults; where families are engaged in the life of their communities, the nation and the world; and where people take responsibility for meeting today's needs as well as those of future generations. Major support for the Equal Voice for America's Families campaign, *Raising Hope: The Equal Voice Story*, and the *Raising Hope Community Engagement Campaign* has been provided by the foundation. www.caseygrants.org



Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB) is a non-profit organization that supports the development, production, acquisition and distribution of public media content that is representative of Latino people or addresses issues of particular interest to Latino Americans. LPB has provided over 120 hours of programming to PBS and organized over 100 workshops to support the professional development of Latino producers, and conducts community engagement campaigns. LPB provides a voice to the diverse Latino communities throughout the United States. www.lpb.org



Active Voice uses film, television and digital media to tell the human stories that spark social change. Our team of strategic communications specialists develops partnerships among filmmakers, funders and thought leaders; plans and manages screenings and high profile events; repurposes digital content for viral distribution; produces educational collateral; and consults with industry and sector leaders. Since our inception in 2001, Active Voice has built a portfolio of campaigns focusing on issues including immigration, criminal justice, healthcare and sustainability. www.activevoice.net