
A Model for Strengthening State Policies

Founded in 2002, the Working Poor Families Project (WPFP) is a national initiative that aims to improve the lives of the nation’s 10.6 million low-income working families through the adoption of state public policies and practices that foster economic mobility. To that end, the WPFP partners with nonprofit organizations in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

The WPFP provides its state-level partners with data, substantive policy information, and financial resources. These resources, when blended with those organizations’ grasp of local and state conditions, help drive changes in state policies affecting postsecondary education and skills training; economic development and job quality; and work supports and family benefits.

Over the last decade and a half, the WPFP and its nonprofit partners have leveraged some $7.6 billion in state investments for low-income working families—investments that provide a stronger foundation for family economic success.

How We Work

The WPFP partners with nonprofit organizations to advance state-level policy changes that improve the educational and economic opportunities available to low-income working families.

The WPFP provides ongoing financial support that allows partner organizations to hone policy expertise in three areas: postsecondary education and skills training; economic development; and work supports and family benefits.

The WPFP builds the organizational capacities of state partners to engage in the state policy change process on issues that affect the ability of low-income working families to achieve economic security and family stability.

The WPFP prepares an annual set of data indicators and employs rigorous analysis to identify the needs of low-income working families and ways of improving public policies and practices.

The WPFP fosters an active learning network among its 23 state partners through annual meetings, state policy academies, educational conference calls, and the yearly publication of policy briefs that explore specific issues in detail.

The Working Poor Families Project is supported by a consortium of national philanthropic organizations that includes The Annie E. Casey, Ford, Joyce, and Kresge foundations. Project management is provided by Brandon Roberts + Associates. To learn more, visit www.workingpoorfamilies.org or write to Brandon Roberts at robert3@starpower.net.
Our Impact

Since 2002, the collaborative model central to the WPFP has generated not just important changes in state policies and practices, but also an impressive return on investment. The WPFP and its nonprofit partners have leveraged some $7.6 billion in state investments for low-income working families. Taken together, these investments have created a stronger foundation for the economic success of low-income working families across the country.

“There is no question that we would not be involved with policy issues related to adult education and literacy absent the WPFP. And our relationship with the WPFP opened the door to other funding opportunities related to postsecondary education and training.”

Don Baylor
Center on Public Policy Priorities
Austin, TX

“We moved into the policy areas of need-based financial aid, career pathways, and remedial education as a direct result of our participation in the WPFP.”

Tony Lee
Statewide Poverty Action Network
Seattle, WA

Our State Partners

The Working Poor Families Project (WPFP) currently partners with 23 nonprofit organizations located in every region of the United States.

AR: Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges; CA: The Campaign for College Opportunity; CO: The Bell Policy Center; CT: Connecticut Association for Human Services; DC: DC Appleseed; GA: Georgia Budget and Policy Institute; IL: Chicago Jobs Council/ Women Employed; IN: Indiana Institute for Working Families; KY: Mountain Association for Community Economic Development; ME: Maine Center for Economic Policy; MD: Job Opportunities Task Force; MA: Crittenton Women’s Union; MI: Michigan League for Public Policy; MS: Mississippi Economic Policy Center; NE: Nebraska Appleseed; NJ: Center for Women and Work, Rutgers, State University of New Jersey; NM: New Mexico Voices for Children; NY: Center for an Urban Future; NC: North Carolina Justice Center; OH: Policy Matters Ohio; TX: Center for Public Policy Priorities; WA: Statewide Poverty Action Network; WI: Center on Wisconsin Strategy

WPFP State Partners

Economic Development $526 million
Postsecondary Education + Skills Training $3,937 million
Adult Education + Literacy $122 million
Career Pathways $149 million
Financial Aid $2,411 million
Workforce Skills + Training $398 million
System Reforms $857 million

Family Benefits $3,135 million
Total State Investments for Low-Income Working Families $7.6 billion

“With the support of the WPFP we were able to advocate for and get passage of legislation related to family leave and workplace discrimination. As a result, many more parents can now take time off from work to care for a child with serious health issues without losing their job.”

Ruthie Liberman
Crittenton Women’s Union
Boston, MA

Writing Credit: South by North Strategies, Ltd., Chapel Hill, NC. Design Credit: InfoGraph Creative, Winston-Salem, NC