

# The 2014 Platform

Our Children, Our Future Campaign to End Child Poverty

## 1. Protect Funding for Family Support Programs

**Goal:** Preserve funding for Family Resource Networks and Starting Points Family Resource Centers across the state.

**Lead organizations:** West Virginia Alliance of Family Resource Networks, WV Family Resource Centers Association, Prevent Child Abuse WV/TEAM for WV Children **How does this affect child poverty:** Families connected with the Starting Points Family Resource Centers rely on these organizations for basic resources and a hand-up out of poverty. Meanwhile, Family Resource Networks provide the glue that keeps community groups, families, congregations, businesses, and service agencies together – they maximize community investments, promote coordination of services, and promote opportunities for families to impact decisions that affect them. **For more information:** Robin Brown, [nicholasfrn@frontier.com](mailto:nicholasfrn@frontier.com) and Marla Short, [startingpoints@hotmail.com](mailto:startingpoints@hotmail.com)

## 2. In-Home Family Education Programs / Early Childhood

**Goal:** Implementation of a multi-year plan for statewide expansion of In-Home Family Education programs, as well as other efforts to expand access to early childhood programs and strengthen WV's early childhood system.

**Lead organizations:** Prevent Child Abuse WV / TEAM for WV Children; Partners in Community Outreach (Coalition of In-Home Family Education Programs in WV). **How does this affect child poverty:** How does this affect child poverty: The CDC, Pew Charitable Trusts, National Conference on State Legislatures, and National Governor's Association, and many other groups have all endorsed early childhood home visitation programs for their effectiveness in promoting child well-being, improving school readiness, and preventing adverse childhood experiences such as child abuse and neglect. **For more information:** Jim McKay [jim@teamwv.org](mailto:jim@teamwv.org)

## 3. Minimum Wage / State EITC SB 411 HB 4283

**Goal:** Increasing the minimum wage and indexing to account for inflation through state legislation, and/or accomplishing a similar result by passing a State Earned Income Tax Credit. **Lead Organizations:** West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, West Virginia Alliance for Sustainable Families, West Virginia AFL-CIO. **How does this affect child poverty:** Raising the minimum wage will put money into the pockets of hard working West Virginians who will spend it in their communities on the things they need. This, in turn, will generate business for our economy and diminish the need for government benefits like food stamps. States that have passed Minimum Wage increases have seen overall job growth and economic expansion. **For more information:** Alyson Clements, [aclements@wvpolicy.org](mailto:aclements@wvpolicy.org)

## 4. Our Kids Need Physical Activity and Recess SB 455

**Goal:** Proposal ensures our children in K-8 are entitled to at least 30 minutes of physical activity (recess and/or physical education) a day during school. **Lead Organizations:** Jamie Jeffrey, M.D., Keys 4 Healthy Kids, Emily Murphy, Obesity Prevention Specialist, West Virginia University Extension Service, Laura Dice, Keys 4 Healthy Kids. **How does this affect child poverty:** Children who live in poverty are at a significantly increased risk of food insecurity and lack of physical activity opportunities that further increases their risk of childhood obesity and adult diseases like hypertension and Type 2 diabetes. **For more information:** Laura Dice, [Laura.Dice@camc.org](mailto:Laura.Dice@camc.org)

## 5. Creating a Future Fund SB 461

**Goal:** Create a permanent mineral trust fund from a portion of severance taxes to provide a permanent source of wealth for WV. **Lead organizations:** WV Center on Budget and Policy, American Friends Service Committee, AFLCIO, WV Council of Churches. **How does this affect child poverty:** History shows that some of the poorest counties in the state are those from which the greatest natural wealth has been taken. The Future Fund will ensure that children of today and tomorrow will have a lasting benefit from resource extraction. **For more information:** Rick Wilson, [rwilson@afsc.org](mailto:rwilson@afsc.org)

## 5. Substance Abuse 3-Part Plan (tie) SB 6

**Goal:** Deal with the Substance Misuse and Abuse problem that is rampant in the State of West Virginia. The solution is to address three specific areas. 1) Address with pseudoephedrine, which is being diverted to manufacture meth. 2) Create an Army for Recovery, by providing adequate funding for Peer-Based Recovery Support through Medicaid Direct Reimbursement. 3) Remove barriers to employment and other services experienced by those in successful long-term recovery. **How does this affect child poverty:** The need to remove children from their homes because of meth being manufactured would be eliminated Individuals would be more successful in recovery, therefore their children would benefit from the positives related to sober productive parents. Those in successful recovery would be able to obtain resources to return to full employment and be able to provide for their children and families. **For more information:** Rev. James Patterson, [Patterson@paac2.org](mailto:Patterson@paac2.org)

*The Our Children, Our Future Campaign is a 170+ member coalition that fights child poverty in West Virginia. We are kids and families and the people that care about them. For more information, e-mail Stephen at [ssmith@wvhealthykids.org](mailto:ssmith@wvhealthykids.org).*

**In addition to playing a leadership role on the Top 5 statewide priorities, the Our Children, Our Future Campaign also endorses on-going efforts to win the following issues in 2014.**

## 6. Quality Homes, Quality Jobs Act

**Goal:** Combining housing and job training opportunities for young adults in West Virginia. **Lead organizations:** Coalfield Development Corporation and others **How does this affect child poverty:** Sixteen percent of West Virginia's housing structures were built in 1939 or earlier. Five thousand lack complete plumbing facilities, and four thousand lack complete kitchen facilities. Almost 10 percent of West Virginians age 15-19 are not enrolled in school and are not in the labor force. Fifty-six percent of West Virginians 18-24 have never attended college, and 17 percent of this age group has less than a high school education. **For more information:** Amelia Pridemore, [apridemore@coalfielddevelopment.org](mailto:apridemore@coalfielddevelopment.org)

## 7. SNAP Limits to Improve Oral Health SB 262

**Goal:** Ask the USDA to allow WV to say SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase non-nutritive soft drinks. **Lead organizations:** The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department. **How does this affect child poverty:** Child health and child poverty are closely linked. One way to improve child health for our most vulnerable kids is to limit soft drinks in their diets. **For more information:** Dick Wittberg, [Richard.a.wittberg@wv.gov](mailto:Richard.a.wittberg@wv.gov)

## 8. Parent Mentor Program

**Goal:** To pilot Parent Mentor Programs in 3-5 schools starting in the fall of 2014, where low-income parents would receive stipends to become aides in the classroom and engage in leadership development activities. **Lead Organizations:** WV Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, HOPE CDC, UKV Starting Points. **How does this affect child poverty:** The Parent Mentor Program, which has been successful outside WV, has proven to increase parent participation in schools, cost-effectively increase the adult-student ratio in schools, spur adult education, and even improve test scores.

**For more information:** Stephen Smith, [ssmith@wvhealthykids.org](mailto:ssmith@wvhealthykids.org).

## 9. Pregnant Workers' Fairness HB 4284

**Goal:** Require employers to make accommodations for pregnant women that would allow a woman to take care of her health needs and complete the job at hand. A reasonable accommodation could be as simple as providing a stool for a pregnant cashier to sit on or allowing a water bottle to be on hand throughout the work day. The West Virginia Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would provide a straight forward set of rules to ensure there are reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers. **Lead organizations:** WV FREE, ACLU WV, AFL-CIO, NASW, Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Perinatal Partnership. **How does this affect child poverty:** When women face a conflict between work and childbearing and are forced unto unpaid leave or fired, rather than provided basic accommodations, families are losing crucial income right at the moment they need it most. This bill will improve women and children's health and bolster the economic security of West Virginia families. **Contact:** Rachel Huff [Rachel@wvfree.org](mailto:Rachel@wvfree.org)

## 10. Increase in Tobacco Tax HB 4138

**Goal:** Increase the WV state tax on tobacco products by a dollar per package, or at least to coincide with the national average. **Lead organizations:** The American Heart Association, The American Stroke Association, The American Cancer Society, The American Lung Association, The Coalition for Tobacco-Free WV, and several others. **How does this affect child poverty:** By increasing the tobacco tax by AT LEAST THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, the public health impact is significant. As parents of children improve their health, they set good examples for their children; have more money for food and other necessities. Making tobacco more expensive discourages children and young teens from starting the habit. **Contact:** Christine Compton, [christine.compton@heart.org](mailto:christine.compton@heart.org)

## ... and 10,500 new voters...

An underlying goal of our campaign in 2014 is also to register, educate, and mobilize 10,500 voters in the upcoming elections. We will be knocking on doors, holding community meetings, educating families about their health care and financial options, and registering voters at community events... all so that everyday families have a powerful voice at the individual, community, and state levels.

**At the individual level**, we are looking for organizations and volunteers who can register voters, knock on doors, or educate families about their health care options. If you are already doing this and want to plug-in, or if you want to start, let us know.



**At the community level,** we are recruiting teams from towns and counties across the State to participate in our first-ever Try This Conference June 6-7<sup>th</sup> to trade ideas about healthy lifestyle projects that promote economic development and improve child and family health outcomes. Teams who attend will be eligible to apply for mini-grants up to \$3,000 to jump-start projects in their communities.

**At the state level,** there are many options. Join an issue team by contacting the folks listed above. Plan a regional forum in your county to promote all the issues. Or get involved in Kids and Families Day at the legislature February 4<sup>th</sup> ([kidsandfamiliesday.eventbrite.com](https://kidsandfamiliesday.eventbrite.com)).