



COALITION ON HUMAN NEEDS

1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW · Suite 312 · Washington, DC 20036 · 202.223.2532 · Fax 202.223.2538 · www.chn.org

Public Policy Priorities 2015-2016

The United States is the richest nation on earth. But for a very large proportion of Americans, economic insecurity is a growing fact of life. Poverty remains stubbornly high, at 14.5 percent in 2013. But that does not begin to convey the precarious footing for millions of people. Nearly one-third of families (31.6 percent) dipped below the poverty line for at least two months from 2009 to 2011. One in three Americans were near poverty in 2013 (below twice the poverty line, or below \$37,104 for a three-person family). Unemployment has declined markedly since the Great Recession, but wages for many are too low to provide security. The lowest 40 percent of workers earn less today than in 2000, after adjusting for inflation.

For people of color, people with disabilities, women, children, youth, and immigrants, poverty and low-wage work are even more prevalent. A damaging combination of market forces and government policy are excluding a large swath of our population from full participation in our economy. People with debt, criminal records, or long-term unemployment, who lack education or legal immigrant status face exclusion from full opportunities for work and from safety net protections.

It is true that a strong economy makes it easier to provide the funding to meet the needs described in the Coalition on Human Needs' 2015-2016 Public Policy Priorities. But it is also true that meeting these human needs is necessary if we are to rebuild a strong economy. Taken together, the policy priorities of CHN will lead to substantial job creation and ensure that most Americans have the opportunity to work at jobs with decent pay and benefits, with a supportive framework of protections and resources to ensure access to health care, education, housing, food, and income during periods when work is not possible or not sufficient to provide for basic needs.

CHN's policy priorities recognize that private sector economic forces alone will not spur the expansion of participation needed for stable and broadly shared prosperity. Today's economy is evidence of that, with virtually all of the gains made since the Great Recession captured by the wealthiest among us. The revenue policies we support will reverse current aspects of the tax code that worsen inequality. Additional equitably collected revenues coupled with willingness to borrow now will enable us to invest in an expanded and well-prepared labor force and in the infrastructure and new technologies needed for sustained economic growth.

If the policies described in our public policy priority document were fully implemented, our people would be healthier, better educated, and better able to get and keep good jobs. Poverty, hunger, and homelessness would decline. More children would get the start they need, and more seniors would have a secure retirement. The long-term unemployed would have opportunities to re-enter the economic mainstream. The "Recession Generation" – our nation's youth - would not be left behind, but would have the chance to get the education and the jobs they need without a punishing burden of debt.

Disinvesting in human needs or cutting some important programs in order to fund others jeopardizes our nation's future prosperity by excluding millions from full economic participation. CHN's policy priorities are responsible, well-documented approaches that improve lives, strengthen economic security, and build our shared future.

CHN Leadership Issues

The Coalition on Human Needs supports a federal agenda that combats the dangers of shrinking opportunities and rising poverty and insecurity. We set as our top priorities:

- Ensuring a Fair and Responsible Budget that Meets Human Needs
- Promoting a Progressive Tax Code That Raises Adequate Revenue

CHN Supportive Issues

The Coalition on Human Needs supports a detailed agenda with the needed protections and investments to make us a stronger nation. In addition to the above top priorities listed as CHN leadership issues, CHN offers support on the following issues:

- Restoring Opportunity and Shared Prosperity
- Building a Stronger Adult Education and Workforce System
- Promoting Fairness in the Workplace
- Improving Job Quality and Meeting Family Responsibilities
- Promoting High Quality Affordable Health Care for Everyone
- Promoting Constructive and Fair Immigration Policy for a Stronger America
- Eradicating Hunger in the United States
- Protecting and Improving the Well Being of America's Children
- Building Pathways out of Poverty to Reconnect America's Youth
- Promoting Inclusive Policies for People with Disabilities
- Ensuring Financial Security for the Aging and People with Disabilities
- Improving Housing and Preventing Homelessness
- Working Toward Foreclosure Prevention and a Better Housing Market for All
- Ensuring Effective Consumer Protections
- Ensuring Access to Justice
- Reforming the Justice System
- Reclaiming Our Democracy
- Maintaining a Comprehensive National Framework for Measuring Economic Security & Hardship
- Implementing Existing Federal Policies

We call upon the Obama Administration and Congress to work towards adopting these Public Policy Priorities.

For the full Coalition on Human Needs **2015-2016 Public Policy Priorities**, visit www.chn.org/issues/.