



Jobs Priorities for New Administration and Congress

PICO is a national community organizing network of 53 faith-based organizations in 17 states. PICO affiliates have helped develop innovative jobs strategies. These approaches provide workforce training to people with multiple barriers to employment and help to connect them to jobs, including green jobs. PICO has negotiated Community Benefits Agreements that require development projects to provide training and jobs to low-income people. One example is an agreement with the Lennar Corp. to provide \$17 million for workforce development as part of the redevelopment of the historic African-American Bay View Hunters Point area.

Our local experience is relevant to the federal job creation initiative because we have learned how to design job initiatives that reach low-income people who are often left out of employment and training programs. In particular, we have learned about the importance of intensive outreach, workforce development, apprenticeships and partnerships with faith institutions and strong community organizations to reaching those who face the greatest barriers to employment, including people leaving the criminal justice system.

PICO affiliates have been meeting with their local governments, training programs and green businesses to identify ways in which stimulus funds could quickly create jobs for low-income workers (we can provide details about specific projects). The recommendations below are meant to help ramp up existing initiatives so that low-income communities benefit from infrastructure and green economy investment. We believe that the organized faith community can help build broad support for economic recovery legislation.

PICO's jobs priorities, as part of Economic Recovery/Stimulus, legislation are:

1. Seeing broad bi-partisan support for Economic Recovery Legislation

PICO understands that passage of stimulus legislation will set the tone for the broader domestic policy agenda. We believe that the faith community can play a role in building broad support for the jobs initiative. PICO affiliates have been holding large public faith events on the housing crisis over the past month. As we continue these events with Members of Congress, we plan to integrate a jobs agenda so that they help generate positive media coverage and Congressional support for a robust jobs initiative.

2. Make workforce development an integral part of infrastructure and green job investment

The Administration and Congress can use the Economic Recovery legislation to connect low-income workers to the labor market by: (a) allocating 1 percent of federal infrastructure grants to support education and training programs, such as apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, to people with barriers to employment (low-income, at-risk young adults, people exiting the criminal justice system); (b) providing additional job training funding through the Workforce Investment Act; and (c) funding the Green Jobs Act (\$125 million) and Pathways Out of Poverty Program (20% of funding) to help low-income people to obtain green jobs.

3. Target infrastructure and green jobs to people facing multiple barriers to employment

Economic recovery legislation could require a portion of work hours on assisted projects (15-30 percent) be performed by low-income people facing barriers to employment. States should prioritize funding for projects that are developed in consultation with community organizations and local employment organizations. Stimulus should also include increased funding for summer and year-round youth jobs.

4. Connect investments in low and moderate-income communities to job creation

Investments designed to address infrastructure and other needs in low-income neighborhoods should be tied to job creation. Specific examples include: (a) funding for Youth Build and other apprenticeship programs to enable low-income residents to repair homes as part of an increase in federal weatherization assistance; (b) dedicated funding to create Gulf Coast jobs to help communities rebuild and repair environmental damage; and (c) competitive community development funding for to local projects in low-income communities with high needs that meet community needs, create sustainable jobs and are developed with community input.