Case Study of Half in Ten, The Campaign to Cut Poverty in Half in Ten Years

Melissa Boteach, Half in Ten Campaign Manager
Campaign objectives

- Build the political and public will to cut poverty in half in ten years
- Win passage of policies to achieve that goal
- Expand the constituency for taking action to fight poverty and increase opportunity
- Increase and demonstrate public support for specific antipoverty policies
- Promote accountability by tracking our progress year to year in reducing poverty and increasing opportunity
Why a goal to reduce poverty?

- focuses a diverse set of partners on achieving a common objective
- Breaks down silos among federal, state, and local government agencies, and inspires innovative solutions and non-traditional collaborations among the public sector, the private sector, non-profits and individuals, all aiming for the same target
- Promotes accountability to make progress
How Half in Ten works

• The Half in Ten campaign is a joint project of the Center for American Progress Action Fund, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and the Coalition on Human Needs.

• Half in Ten partners with individuals, state organizations, and elected officials to promote sound public policies that fight poverty.
Guiding principles and 2010 policy agenda

• Half in Ten advocates for policies that create good jobs, promote economic security, and strengthen families.

• For the remainder of 2010, Half in Ten is focusing on the following policy issues:
  - Making the tax code work for working families by making the 2009 reforms to the EITC and CTC permanent
  - Continuing federal unemployment benefits through the end of 2011
  - Saving subsidized jobs by extending the TANF ECF
  - Fighting back cuts to human needs programs in the upcoming appropriations process
Campaign Structure

• National Half in Ten Coalition
• State-level coalitions
• Cultivating individual activists
• Outreach to grassroots organizations
National Coalition

- 40+ national organizations working together on key policy priorities
- Joint Hill visits and Hill briefings on budget, tax, job-creation legislation, etc.
- Increased efforts to coordinate grassroots outreach to build political will on key antipoverty policy priorities
- Partnering on timely policy briefs and resources to inform antipoverty legislation or lift up an important issue (i.e. partnering with NCLR on Latino child poverty brief)
Half in Ten State Coalitions

- Minnesota: Affirmative Options Coalition, A MN Without Poverty, and the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
- Arkansas: Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Colorado: 9to5: National Association for Working Women
- Virginia: Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy
Examples of our state coalition work

- **Colorado** training hundreds of low-wage women to advocate on the policies that directly impact them

- **Minnesota** (later this week) will hold large-scale event, web-linked to 5 sites across the state, with hundreds of people to check-in on the status of poverty in MN and will hold an artistic competition to draw attention to the issue

- **Arkansas** holds policy cafes across the state, educating grassroots activists, they just published recommendations of their state poverty commission, which recommended state goal to cut poverty in half in 10 years

- **Virginia** creating a documentary of what poverty looks like in the state, collecting stories of people who lost their jobs/access to services to put a human face on the policies
Cultivating & Empowering individual activists

- Monthly action alert & sample letters on timely policy issue
- Newsletter with up-to-date resources for activists
- New media action opportunities (twitter and facebook, etc…)
- Webinars to train activists and issue large-scale calls to action
- Grassroots resources for public education. Examples:
  - Poverty Data by Congressional District – Interactive Map
  - Video on supplemental poverty measure
Partnering with grassroots groups

- Grassroots groups sign the Half in Ten pledge (so far over 100 groups across the country) and commit to:
  - Placing op-eds and LTEs
  - Hosting events
  - Submitting a program/event ideas
  - Circulating action alerts and policy resources
  - Developing spokespeople, collecting stories
  - Using new media (Facebook, Twitter, blogs) to build the movement
  - Encouraging individuals and organizational coalition partners to join Half in Ten
Tracking Progress Towards the Goal, 2010-2020

• Headline statistic is supplemental poverty data so that we can register the impact of public policies in cutting poverty in half
• But we also recognize that just because someone is earning slightly above the poverty level does not mean they are economically secure
• Therefore, we will examine and track several other indicators over the next several beginning with a baseline report published next fall
Key resources

- Half in Ten one-pager and policy agenda
- Short video in Spanish describing Half in Ten
- Fact sheets on the earned income tax credit, the child tax credit, and the TANF emergency fund
- Seminal 2007 report: *From Poverty to Prosperity*
- Interactive map: 2009 Poverty Data by Congressional District
Contact information

- Email: mboteach@halfinten.org
- Website: www.halfinten.org
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/halfinten
- Follow us on Twitter: @halfinten
- Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/user/HalfInTen