



## **Summary of Family Strengthening Peer Network Meeting**

Thursday, April 6, 2006, 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

NeighborWorks America, Washington, DC

1) Presentation: Workplace Supports for Lower-Wage Employees  
Lynn Mitchell, Policy Director, Corporate Voices for Working Families

- Corporate Voices for Working Families is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporate membership organization created to bring the private sector voice into the public dialogue on issues affecting working families.
- Five focus areas: early childhood education and afterschool care; workplace flexibility; mature workforce; youth transitions; family economic stability.
- Corporate Voices recently released a best practices toolkit, *Model Workplace Supports for Lower-Wage Employees*. It provides case studies of exceptional programs in the areas of dependent care; employee assistance and development; financial incentives; financial assistance; flexible work schedules; and employer assisted housing.
- Lessons Learned: one size does not fit all—programs and policies can be adapted for individual companies; communication with employees, including in different languages, is essential; promoting programs' cost-neutrality to convince employers to implement them (programs more than pay for themselves in terms of employee attraction, retention, and loyalty)
- For more information, please see the attached PowerPoint presentation. The toolkit is available for free download at [www.cvworkingfamilies.org](http://www.cvworkingfamilies.org)

Discussion:

- Aspects of model programs can benefit nonprofits; toolkit intended for all employers.
- Present this to Assembly members' HR staff and corporate partners.
- Roles of nonprofits as employers and as service providers.
- Immediate goal can be to focus on internal organizational practices to support lower-wage workers and to work with affiliates.
- Another goal is to reach out to corporate partners and other businesses in the community to create supports for lower-wage workers; Corporate Voices is developing a "community to business" toolkit on how to engage businesses (to be released this Fall).
- The key to this goal is finding the right champion within a company who can promote these policies internally and can also influence other businesses; include business members of nonprofit boards—create a peer group; identify examples of how affiliates are engaging businesses.
- Another goal is to influence public policy related to supports for lower-income workers.

2) Adapting National League of Cities' *City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth*

- The National League of Cities' (NLC) Institute for Youth, Education, and Families recently released a new platform that recommends various ways in which mayors, council members and senior city administrators can improve outcomes for children, youth and families.
- The first section of the platform identifies the "essential infrastructure" that is needed in every community for sustained progress.
- The second part offers a set of specific action steps that communities should take in each of seven areas: early childhood development; youth development; education and afterschool; health and safety; youth in transition and at risk; family economic success; and neighborhoods and community.

--NLC's goal is to challenge every city and town to adopt the platform and take concrete steps that are likely to yield immediate and significant results.  
--The National Assembly would like to create a similar family strengthening platform for human service organizations. Please stay tuned for information about an upcoming conference call on this topic.  
--For more information about NLC's platform, visit <http://www.nlc.org/iyef/7915.cfm>.

### 3) General comments, member announcements, and discussion of future meeting topics

--Alliance for Children and Families' Ways to Work program—provides unsecured loans to people who are non-creditworthy for getting in/staying in/advancing in workforce.  
--Mainly used for purchasing used cars to get to work; also critical for daycare of choice  
--\$22 million loaned to 11,000 individuals.  
--86% repayment rate; 41% increase in take-home pay for borrowers; studying impact on credit scores.  
--Program shows you can do social purpose banking through a nonprofit organization.  
--For more information, visit [www.waystowork.org](http://www.waystowork.org).

--Several participants shared information about their family strengthening awards programs.  
--Need way of sharing information on awards program structures and winners—post information on Assembly's Family Strengthening website.  
--Information about the peer network is available at <http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/aboutus.html#peernetwork>  
--Enhance this web page with information on members' projects—clearinghouse on what everyone is doing related to family strengthening.

--National Assembly is starting to document how members are incorporating family strengthening into their organizations' work.

--Immigration as a family strengthening issue was brought up several times during the meeting. It was suggested that the group focus on supports for immigrant families and the ability of nonprofits to provide services. This topic will be included on the next meeting's agenda.

### Attendance

Kelita Bak, Camp Fire USA  
Gill Bosh, The Salvation Army  
Danielle Butler, America's Promise –The Alliance for Youth  
Renee Carl, National Human Services Assembly  
David Carrier, National Human Services Assembly  
Caroline Crocoll, USDA CSREES  
Jennifer Davis, Goodwill Industries International  
Thaddeus Ferber, Forum for Youth Investment  
Katie Ferrier, YMCA of the USA  
Molly French, National Human Services Assembly  
Heidi Goldberg, National League of Cities  
Peter Goldberg, Alliance for Children and Families  
Irv Katz, National Human Services Assembly  
Lynn Mitchell, Corporate Voices for Working Families  
Elizabeth Mugala, National Network for Youth  
Beth Poffenberger Lovell, Volunteers of America  
Miriam Shark, Annie E. Casey Foundation  
Jane Stenson, Catholic Charities USA  
Barbara Taylor, YMCA of the USA  
Steven Tuminaro, NeighborWorks America