

# Voice of the Poor

April, 2007

[www.voiceofthepoor.org](http://www.voiceofthepoor.org)  
[www.stvincentdepaul.net](http://www.stvincentdepaul.net)

## **Diocesan Council President Speaks Out on the Arizona State Budget:**

*The following letter was sent to every member of the State Legislature and Governor Napolitano in early March. This year the majority of bills supported by Voice of the Poor have been made part of ongoing budget negotiations.*

“Desperate, low-income families rely on the emergency assistance provided by the 3,000 volunteer members in the 86 conferences of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul throughout central and northern Arizona. Our help is frequently the last resort for Arizonans who are without food, short on rent, unable to pay utility bills, or have an unexpected car repair or medical expense. Arizona’s safety net is a combination of faith-based and non-profit organizations working with city, county, state and federal programs. All of these resources are essential to the sustainability of working poor families.

As you proceed with the hard work of balancing our State budget, we ask that you place a high priority on programs for the working poor families of our state. Specifically, we believe the following programs are vital for their well-being and productivity.

### **Children’s Healthcare**

- Re-establish KidsCare contracting with schools and community

**The VOP Planning Committee will next meet on Monday, April 23 at 3:30 in the Vincentian Support Services Conference Room. Meetings are open.**

organizations to reach the over 100,000 uninsured Arizona children who are eligible for this 3:1 federal matching program.

- Expand the eligibility levels of KidsCare, so that parents without a work-related healthcare option can provide healthcare for their children.
- Expand KidsCare healthcare coverage to include pregnant mothers.

### **Subsidized Child Care**

- Institute a market survey of childcare assistance rates every two years and pay up to 75% of that survey. Appropriate funding to align rates paid with survey results.

### **Housing/Homelessness/Utility Assistance**

- Support legislation creating escrow trust accounts with 50% of the interest earned placed in the State Housing Trust Fund.
- Appropriate \$1.5 million for services for homeless families.
- Appropriate \$.5 million for the State Utility Assistance Fund.

### **Arizona Charitable Tax Credit**

- Remove the confusing baseline year requirement in the current law to help qualified faith-based and non-profit organizations serve the working poor.