

Voice of the Poor

National website: www.voiceofthepoor.org
NEW Phoenix website: www.stvincentdepaul.net

January, 2007

VOP Issue Survey

Thank you! Twenty-five Conferences made time to discuss and rate advocacy issues for Voice of the Poor! The top five priority issues based on Conference response are:

- 1. Affordable housing** (marked by 18 Conferences and ranked first by 10)
- 2. Utility subsidies**
- 3. Childcare subsidies**
- 4. Shelter and services for the homeless**
- 5. (Tie) Job training and KidsCare/KidsCare Parent Healthcare**

Your responses have been incorporated in the 2007 Society Diocesan Council Legislative Agenda posted on the Society's website. VOP members will be meeting with State legislators in early January to discuss the this agenda and any related legislation.

Moving Forward on Affordable Housing

Lucy Howell and John Feit met with Phoenix Councilman, Greg Stanton, in early December to discuss the relatively low share of federal dollars returned to Arizona for Section 8 Housing Vouchers and CBDG funding. Arizona's rapid growth, particularly in the Phoenix metro area, has also brought an increase in people whose incomes have not kept pace with escalating rents. The contributions of the Society's Conferences to rent and utilities for needy families was part of the discussion. Councilman Stanton intends to continue to gather support for a coordinated approach to the Arizona congressional delegation emphasizing the need for increased availability of Section 8 vouchers as a way to expand the stock of affordable housing.

Outreach on Food Stamps and Arizona SelfHelp.org

Katie Kahle, of Arizona Community Action Association (ACAA), is a community resource for Food Stamp Outreach and other programs for low income families. Katie is available to speak to your Conference and can be reached at (602) 604-0640. ACAA publishes the People's Information Guide and will have the 2007 edition ready in Feb. Copies have been ordered for distribution from Vincentian Support to Conferences. Meanwhile updated information about community services can be found at www.ArizonaSelfHelp.org.

Help Promote the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

Maricopa County is in the process of distributing information about the earned income tax credit worth thousands of dollars to working poor families. Copies of the brochure "Taxes Done Free-Claim Your EITC", prepared by the Governor's office, will be sent to Conference presidents from VSS working with VOP. It has been shown that the best time to promote the program is in January BEFORE workers receive their W-2 forms. Information about free tax preparation sites is part of this information.

Next VOP Planning Meeting: Monday, Jan. 29 at 3:30 p.m. VSS Conference Room