

## Helping Low-Income Working Families in Tough Economic Times

A proposed one-day conference to provide strategies to empower low-income working families in asset development, financial education, and access using the private sector in addition to traditional programs.

1. Main conference themes
  - a. Asset development and creation
  - b. Financial literacy and skill building
  - c. Fair lending
  - d. Provision of housing
2. Conference organized to provide education and practical solutions with the goal that each state team develop goals and an implementation plan
3. Montana plan centered on addressing asset creation and financial skill building, along with technical assistance from NCSL to provide similar training to more legislators
  - a. Asset creation
    - i. Helps low-income families accumulate assets to survive short term financial crises, begin a business, help finance vehicles or a home
    - ii. Two types of asset creation used by other states
      1. Individual development accounts
        - a. Some states have used TANF funds to match family savings at various matching rates
      2. EITC (earned income tax credit) – tax refunds due low-income working families that do not owe taxes
        - a. Some states have actively promoted education for persons to claim the EITC
  - b. Financial literacy skill building
    - i. Helps low-income families understand credit, money management, and financial planning
      1. Some states have provided broad based education, including providing the education in high school
      2. Some states have integrated the education with work programs
  - c. Technical assistance from NCSL
    - i. Montana team suggested a one day conference for all legislators to hear the conference information with an attempt to ensure participation of members of the Children, Families, Health, and Human Services Committee, the Economic Affairs Interim Committee, the Legislative Finance Committee, , as well as members of the session health and human services standing committee and the appropriations committee and joint subcommittees
    - ii. Potential dates – January meeting date (25, 26, 27?).
4. Legislation and appropriation changes might be necessary to implement the plan