



Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Asset-Building Policy Coalitions in the United States

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2008

CSD Policy Report
No. 08-09

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Acknowledgements

The Center for Social Development wishes to thank Karen Edwards, KME Consulting, author of this report, and Gena Gunn, CSD Project Director, for their contributions to the development and ongoing progress of the State Assets Policy Project (SAPP) research, which forms the foundation and substance of this report.

CSD also acknowledges important contributions to SAPP by a number of talented and dedicated Washington University MSW and PhD research associates, who completed essential research and implementation work on state-level assets policy, program, and coalition developments from 2001 – 2008, in particular Haley A-bel, Noorie Brantmeier, Emily Carpenter, Charlene Carruthers, Perryn Desloge, Mary Kate Dennis, Jennifer Downs, Christy Finsel, Angela Gilbreath, Michal Grinstein-Weiss, Jennifer Heffern, Sarah Hicks, Ngeri Kagotho, Melinda Lewis, Lisa Reyes Mason, Marissa Nuveyestewa, Aja Riley, Brandi Sweet, Kim Tunnell, Vontriece Valentine, Kristen Wagner, and Naomi Warren.

Gena Gunn and Karen Edwards, as co-directors of SAPP for many years, wish to thank and acknowledge other key partners who worked with them (in several cases, over many years) on various SAPP projects related to assets coalition-building work, including Carl Rist of CFED; Beadsie Woo of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (formerly of CFED); Rene Bryce-LaPorte (formerly of CFED), Leslie Parrish of the Center for Responsible Lending (formerly of the New America Foundation); Irene Skricki of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Benita Melton of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Lisa Mensah of the Aspen Institute (formerly of the Ford Foundation), Kilolo Kijakazi of the Ford Foundation, Merle Lawrence of the Levi Strauss Foundation, Sarah Dewees, Mary Phillips, and Jerilyn DeCoteau of First Nations Development Institute (FNDI); Peter Morris of the National Congress of American Indians (formerly of FNDI); Dee Dee Leydorf and Megan O’Neal (both formerly of the World Institute on Disabilities); Janet Hamer, Carl Neely, Craig Nolte, Michael Milner, Nancy Montoya, and Steven Shepelwich of the Federal Reserve Banks of Atlanta, Kansas City, Richmond, and San Francisco (respectively), Andres Dominquez (formerly of Kauffman Foundation and Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City), Gladys Washington of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation. Other key partners include a number of long-standing state-level assets coalition-building partners and collaborators, particularly Janet Abbott (WA), Bob Agres (HI), Ntam Baharanyi (AL), Cornelius Blanding (GA), Janet Byrd (OR), Fernando Castillo (AZ), Kristi Coker (OK), Monica Copeland (NC), Lynne Cutler (PA), Denise DeVaan (MN), Angela Duran (AR), Sokoya Finch (FL), David Foster (OR), Iris Friday (WA), Ron Gilbert (GA), Carolyn Glackin (DE), Lucy Gorham (NC), Neil Goslin (LA), Gina Guillemette (IL), Sharon Henderson (NM), Raymond Hicks (NB), Senator Robert Jackson (MS), Tiffany Jarvis (KS) Anna Knight (OK), Paul Knox (WA), Karen LaFrance (AZ), Deepak Lamba-Nieves (PR), Alisa Larsen (OR), Melinda Lewis (KS), Ralph Lippman (CA), Susan Lindson (MI), Ben Mangan (CA), Bernie Mazcyk (SC), Robin McKinney (MD), Margaret Miley (MA), Eric Muschler (MI), Alice Paris (AL), Ona Porter (NM), Dory Rand (IL), Don Shircell (AK), Shana Simpson-Hall (NC), Lanelle Smith (AZ), Melbah Smith (MS), Lina Alfieri Stern, (LA), Tawny Stottlemire (KS), Woody Widrow (TX), Cynthia Winter(OR), and Shirley Worthington (AL).

The author also wishes to acknowledge CSD staff for their leadership, knowledge-sharing, editorial, and production contributions to this publication, especially Michael Sherraden, Gena Gunn, Anupama Jacob, Julia Stevens, and Carrie Freeman.

This report was made possible by support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Ford Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and Levi Strauss Foundation. We thank them for their tremendous support, now and over several years, while acknowledging that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author and CSD alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of these foundations.

Asset-Building Policy Coalitions in the United States

Asset-building coalitions, task forces, and collaboratives serve as successful venues for developing, promoting, and implementing asset-building policies and initiatives in states. Beginning with those that focused mainly on Individual Development Accounts (IDAs),¹ the Center for Social Development (CSD) has tracked and studied the inception and development of a number of active assets coalitions over the last several years, gathering and analyzing information through a variety of data collection methods.

To inform this publication CSD used data on assets coalition building collected through various surveys, interviews with key coalition leaders, information gathered at various assets coalition meetings, presentations given at CSD hosted State Assets Policy Conferences and other policy meetings, and from state-level assets coalition websites. This report is intended to reflect CSD's key findings, conclusions, and recommendations related to the opportunities, challenges, and benefits of establishing and sustaining state asset-building coalitions.

CSD's Role in Asset-Building Coalition Development in the United States²

CSD began tracking, studying, and disseminating information on IDA and similar assets policy development in 1999, with support from the Ford Foundation. The State IDA Policy Project expanded in scope in 2003, evolving into the State Assets Policy Project (SAPP), with support from the Ford, Charles Stewart Mott, Annie E. Casey, Ewing Marion Kauffman, F. B. Heron, and Levi Strauss Foundations. SAPP continues to assist states and Native American communities in determining effective ways to institute and support public policies that provide asset-building opportunities for all people, including families in the lowest income tiers. In addition, SAPP's main goal is to research and document asset-building policy trends particularly studying the connections between IDAs and other assets policies. (For more information on SAPP, please see

¹ IDAs are typically established as part of matched savings initiatives designed to promote savings and ownership of developmental assets, such as homes, businesses, and higher education. IDA programs and initiatives generally target individuals and families with low-incomes as participants. IDA initiatives have been established in all fifty states, and internationally.

² The Center for Social Development (CSD) was instituted in 1994 as part of the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis. CSD undertakes research and policy studies informing how individuals, families, and communities, particularly those with low-incomes, can increase capacity, formulate and reach life goals, and contribute to the economy and society. Towards these ends CSD provides data and makes research-based recommendations to state and federal policymakers for designing asset-building initiatives that are inclusive of all populations, at all income levels.

<http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/CSD/policy/index1.htm>.) SAPP's strategy for achieving this goal is multi-pronged:

- 1) Completing and compiling research on state-level assets policy initiatives and activities in the United States; producing and disseminating related publications to inform a variety of constituencies on effective asset policy development.
- 2) Working directly with state assets policymakers and advocates, including leaders and representatives of Native Nations, to offer technical assistance in considering a variety of assets policy development strategies, for the benefit of their communities and constituencies.
- 3) Planning and hosting annual conferences on assets policy development, targeting key policymakers and advocates who want to establish effective assets policies in the United States, offering unique opportunities for networking and in-depth discussions specifically related to state-level asset-building policy development and implementation.
- 4) Assisting states and Native American communities to develop coalitions dedicated to promoting and instituting sustainable and inclusive asset-building policies and initiatives, including developing strategies for recruiting coalition membership from all population groups, and engaging philanthropic, community, financial, economic, government, business, and corporate leaders in these efforts.
- 5) Creating online and other venues for information sharing regarding IDA and other assets policy developments and strategies.

In addition to assisting states and Native American communities to develop asset-building policies and agendas,³ CSD has also encouraged the formation and strengthening of assets policy coalitions at the state and tribal levels. The assets policy conferences hosted by CSD between 2000 and 2007 were a particularly successful venue for providing this assistance, offering opportunities for state and tribal asset-building coalition leaders to evaluate and further develop their coalition-building strategies, and examining the strategies of other states in this regard.

CSD state policy research completed to date suggests that asset-building coalitions are valuable for developing and gaining support for asset-building policies and initiatives at the local, Native Nation, and state levels. Asset-building coalitions appear to provide an ideal venue for bringing together diverse partners with the common goal of increasing opportunities for low-income individuals, families, and communities to build assets and develop financial security. This report draws on CSD's research on assets coalitions, including surveys, interviews with key coalition

³ Much of CSD's policy work with Native American communities has been completed in partnership with organizations such as First Nations Development Institute (FNDI), the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona, and a number of private Native consultants. FNDI is a national leader in providing funding and assistance for establishing and studying asset-building initiatives in Native communities. FNDI has initiated projects promoting the establishment of Native-run and Native-focused assets coalitions in several states – Arizona and Oklahoma in particular, where Native assets coalitions are currently active.

leaders, presentations given at CSD’s State Assets Policy Conferences and other venues, and websites created to serve state-level assets coalitions, reflecting key findings and conclusions from that body of research. Based on CSD’s findings, the report also offers several recommendations related to the opportunities, benefits, and challenge of establishing and sustaining state asset-building coalitions.

Asset-Building Coalitions in the US

Defining Asset-Building Coalitions

Although it may be impossible to track the exact number of active assets coalitions in the United States, since no single organization or entity connects or registers them, CSD estimates that somewhere between 20 to 30 statewide asset-building coalitions (also called collaboratives, task forces, and consortiums) are currently formed and active to some degree in the United States.⁴ (See Table 1) However, among these formed and forming assets coalitions there seems to be a lack of consensus regarding the definition of the term “asset-building coalition.” Some asset-building coalitions focus efforts on promoting one or two specific asset-building policies or initiatives (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit,⁵ or EITC, and IDAs), while others focus efforts on instituting a more comprehensive body of asset-building policies and initiatives at the state-level. Still others focus more on training and information sharing regarding a number of asset-building initiatives, with policy efforts placed at a lower priority level.

EITC coalitions are most often made up of a number of Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites organized at the local, state, or regional levels, many of which use a variety of methods to encourage consumers to build assets. These coalitions are often titled as asset-building coalitions. The main goal of EITC-focused asset-building coalitions is to encourage greater take up and receipt of the EITC. However, many of these coalitions also encourage individuals and families who qualify for EITC to engage in such asset-building activities as establishing savings accounts with a portion of their EITC refund. When individuals visit EITC coalition-member VITA sites to get their taxes prepared, they are also often informed of how to open bank accounts, attend financial education classes, apply for supplementary income benefits such as food stamps, and find local asset-building programs and initiatives such as IDAs. EITC coalitions may also use meetings and gatherings to inform both members and the public of new policy developments related to EITC and other available tax credits for families with low incomes, including the new option (as of 2006) of splitting electronic tax refund deposits into up to three different financial accounts.

⁴ Current states and other groups represented in this number are not always those identified as IDA coalitions years ago, since some older coalitions no longer exist and new ones have developed. This number is based on: a CSD survey of states (See Warren & Edwards, CSD, 2005); CSD’s direct work with assets coalitions; and other related publications.

⁵ EITC is a federal policy that allows low-income families that meet certain eligibility requirements to apply for refundable tax credits on their regular tax returns that can add up to significant returns. Some states also have EITC policies, many allowing additional refundable credits to be applied for from the states.

Interestingly, the promotion of the EITC as an asset-building policy, instead of exclusively as an income enhancement policy, is a relatively new focus. This particular shift in policy framing is significant for assets policy development efforts in general, since EITC is currently considered one of the most effective federal anti-poverty policies in the US.⁶ It would be of great benefit to the asset-building field in general if EITC coalition efforts would be better connected with the efforts of geographically-related asset-building coalitions that develop and support broad asset-building policy agendas.

IDA coalitions are typically dedicated to developing, instituting, and implementing IDA policies and programs in states; securing and increasing IDA funding appropriations and support (from both public and private sources); establishing and maintaining technical assistance opportunities for IDA programs, improving IDA program design; completing IDA program research; and establishing lines of communication and networking among members (including offering meeting and conferencing opportunities). Many of these coalitions have also been successful in instituting considerable state support for IDA policies and programs. In 2000 there were approximately 30 IDA policy and program coalitions in the country (Rist, Ruffin, & Daily, 2001), and a significant number of those coalitions were also attempting to institute a number of additional asset-building policies in their states.

However, the type of asset-building coalitions that CSD works with more concertedly of late, and sees as likely to be most effective for broad policy change in the long term, are the ones seeking to institute a broad agenda of asset-building policies, mainly at the state level, creating sound policy foundations for the expansion of asset-building opportunities and protections for the families with low-incomes living in their states. (See Table 1.)

⁶ EITC proponents at many VITA sites across the country encourage qualified claimants to save at least a part of their EITC refund, most particularly in IDAs. See Wagner, Edwards, Jorgensen & Klar (CSD, 2006). Also, some private tax preparation companies, such as H & R Block have begun selling savings and retirement products to EITC recipients and low-income taxpayers, at their tax preparation sites.

Table 1: Active, Formed, or Actively Forming State-level Asset-Building Coalitions

Coalition Name	State or Population Represented	Activity Level	Website
Alabama Asset-Building Coalition	Alabama	Active	No website available
The Assets for Arizona Alliance	Arizona	Active	http://www.assetsaz.org/Alliance.htm
Arizona Native Assets Coalition (ANAC)	Arizona Native	Active	http://www.aznativeassets.org/
Arkansas Assets Coalition	Arkansas	Active	http://www.arassetpolicy.org/news.asp
Assets Policy Initiative of California (APIC)	California	Active	http://www.assetpolicy-ca.org/
Name Unknown	Connecticut	Formed and Report Completed	http://www.ctkidslink.org/publications/econ08strengthen.pdf
Governor's Task Force for Financial Independence	Delaware	Formed and Report Completed	http://governor.delaware.gov/publications/financial_independence_final_report.pdf
Capital Area Asset Builders (CAAB)	District of Columbia	Active	http://caab.org/index.php
Florida Assets Building Coalition	Florida	Forming	No website available
Ho'owaiwai Asset Policy Coalition	Hawaii	Formed and Report Completed	For reports: http://www.hacbed.org/index.html .
The Illinois Asset-Building Group (IABG)	Illinois	Active	http://www.illinoisassetbuilding.org/
Kansas Partners for Asset Development (KPAD)	Kansas	Active	No website available
Maryland Asset-Building Initiative	Maryland	Active	http://www.mdchildcare.org/mdcfc/pdfs/md_asset_building.pdf
The MIDAS Collaborative	Massachusetts	Formed and Report Completed	http://www.massassets.org/index.html
The Asset Building Coalition for Michigan (ABC)	Michigan	Formed and Report Completed	http://www.cedam.info/ABC.htm
Missouri Asset Development Committee (MADC) of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW)	Missouri	Active	http://www.masw.org/programs/asset.php
Northern Plains Initiative of Rural Dynamics	Montana, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming	Active	http://www.plainstalk.org/index.html
Nebraska Asset-Building Coalition	Nebraska	Forming	No website available
New Mexico Assets Consortium	New Mexico	Active	http://www.communityactionnewmexico.org/assets/index.html

ASSET-BUILDING POLICY COALITIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Coalition Name	State or Population Represented	Activity Level	Website
IDA & Asset-Building Collaborative of North Carolina	North Carolina	Active	http://www.ncidacollaborative.org/
Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition (ONAC)	Oklahoma Native	Active	No website available
Neighborhood Funding Partnership and Oregon Thrives & Cascade Policy Institute	Oregon	Active	http://www.ohcs.oregon.gov/OHCS/ISD/SAS/docs/HousingConference/Oregon_Thrives_10_Bills.pdf
Pennsylvania Task Force for Working Families	Pennsylvania	Formed and Report Completed	http://www.banking.state.pa.us/banking/cwp/view.asp?a=1354&q=547319&bankingNav= 32150 32185
South Carolina Asset Development Collaborative (SCAD-C)	South Carolina	Active	No website available
RAISE Texas	Texas	Active	http://www.covenantcapital.org/html/publicpolicy/idanetwork.html
Name Unknown	Utah	Forming	No website available
Washington Asset-Building Coalition	Washington	Active	http://communitiesconnect.wikispaces.com/Statewide+Asset+Building+Coalition
Northwest Area Native Assets Coalition	Washington Native	Active	No website available

Explanation of terms used:

Active: Coalition is meeting regularly and establishing a policy initiative.

Formed and Report Completed: Coalition was created and met regularly to create a report; some level of activity still occurring.

Forming: Some coalition meetings may have taken place, and leadership established, but no ongoing meeting schedule or policy strategy has been determined.

Determining the Purpose and Strategy of Asset-Building Coalitions

As with definition, a consensus on the purposes and strategies of asset-building coalitions also appears to be generally lacking. A number of existing asset-building coalitions (most typically known as “task forces”) were initially organized for short-term purposes, such as bringing key groups of stakeholders together for a series of meetings to create studies or reports on general asset-building policies in states.⁷ For example, an asset-building task force was developed in Delaware for the specific purpose of setting an inclusive asset-building policy agenda for the state. When this task force’s work was completed it continued on, but as an ad hoc policy advocacy group rather than a formal coalition. The report created by this group was the first comprehensive report on state asset-building policies completed in the US, and a number of policy advocates in Delaware continue to advance the policy recommendations presented in this report (State of Delaware, 2002).

Differences in definitions and purposes of asset-building coalitions serve to make it difficult to identify effective practices across the field. Several asset-building task forces continued past their initial purpose to become active asset-building coalitions, but experienced varying degrees of success in regrouping and recruiting new members. A few, including California and North Carolina, gained new or additional funding support and members as they continued to strategize asset-building policy development in their various states.

North Carolina’s IDA Collaborative, for example, was first established in 1996, but members later determined that the state IDA program could become more effective if additional asset-building policies for low-income people were instituted in the state. The members expanded their efforts (and collaborative membership) and re-organized in 2003 as a 501(c)3 non-profit, which helped them gain the additional funding needed for hiring staff, operations costs, and for launching the “North Carolina IDA and Asset Building Collaborative.”⁸ The expanded collaborative also supports a “North Carolina Assets Policy Task Force.”

A number of active asset-building coalitions determined that they can best achieve their goals by focusing on gaining early policy successes. These coalitions chose a few key asset-building policies, from the broad assets policy agenda identified by coalition members, to concentrate initial efforts on (such as the Illinois Asset Building Group focusing primarily on instituting children’s savings account policy and eliminating the state asset limit requirement for public assistance programs). These coalitions hope that some early policy successes will create a solid foundation from which to make future assets policy gains.⁹

⁷ Examples of this model include California, Delaware, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Michigan – see the listing of web links for these reports in the addendum. Some states reversed this trend and established assets coalitions that then began to work towards creating such a report for their states – examples include North Carolina and Kansas.

⁸ See upcoming CSD case study (June 2008) of the North Carolina collaborative, including the North Carolina Asset Policy Task Force, with information on the development and ongoing efforts of this task collaborative.

⁹ Illinois is a good example of this strategy: the Illinois Asset Building Group currently focuses on establishing a children’s savings policy in the state. See Heffern, Kagotho, & Edwards (CSD, 2006).

Many IDA coalitions, such as North Carolina's, that have been active in the field for a while, built important foundations for expanding policy efforts to include advocating for increased asset-building policy and program opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, the IDA advocacy work associated with these coalitions established a solid base of partners who later supported additional asset-building policies and activities.

Case Study: Washington Asset Building Coalition

The Washington Asset Building Coalition (WABC)^{*} sprang directly from efforts to expand the state-supported IDA program. WABC came together in October, 2006 to move beyond a focus on IDAs and expand asset building opportunities across the state of Washington. Over 50 partnering organizations assisted in gaining \$2.8 million from the Legislature for IDAs and other asset-building initiatives for 2007-09 (including funding to support coalition activities).

WABC is led by an Executive Team co-chaired by Paula Mahoney, Community Development Officer, Washington Mutual (WAMU), and Larry Stuckart, Executive Director, Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP). Coalition work teams are dedicated to advancing the following four goal areas established by WABC, at a state asset-building summit held in 2006:

- Create a range of private and public prosperity products for asset building.
- Develop and promote public and lending policies for asset building.
- Market savings, smart borrowing and benefits like the EITC.
- Expand financial literacy opportunities and outcomes across the state.

^{*} For more information on WABC, contact Paul Knox at paulk@cted.wa.gov. WABC will be hosting a second statewide asset-building summit scheduled to be held in June 2008. You may also access the WABC website for additional information, at: <http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/994/default.aspx>.

Policy Accomplishments of Asset-Building Coalitions

Several currently active asset-building coalitions study existing state asset-building policy strategies in states (which mostly serve constituents who have already built some wealth), and advocate for making existing policies more inclusive of people at all income levels. For example, several state-level asset-building coalitions have recommended to their state legislators that they include a match for the college savings of families with low-incomes in state College 529 Plans. These examinations and re-thinking of basic state assets policy structures and strategies often

includes evaluations of how effective (or ineffective) these policies really are for encouraging wealth-building for all families, including those with low-incomes.¹⁰

Below are a few additional examples of policy and advocacy efforts of asset-building coalitions in the United States. The combined efforts of existing asset-building coalitions speak powerfully to the efficacy, dedication, and accomplishments of these groups towards increasing opportunities for inclusive wealth-building policy and program initiatives for all people in the US.

Selected examples of policy efforts by asset-building coalitions in states include:

California: The Assets Policy Institute of California (APIC), together with the New America Foundation, launched the Asset Policy Forum speaking series in 2007 to create an opportunity for experts in the asset-building field to discuss an array of strategies and policies that would enable and encourage all Californians to save money and build wealth. APIC encourages policymakers, legislative staff, advocates, academics, and others to attend the series, which includes lunch and a compelling discussion each month. Policy-related topics included “banking the un-banked,” “the mortgage lending crisis,” and “savings opportunities.”¹¹

Illinois: The Illinois Assets Building Group (IABG) was active in successful efforts to pass legislation making utility rates affordable, expanding healthcare in the state, expanding the state EITC, and protecting consumers from predatory mortgage lending (Shriver Center, 2007).

Delaware: The Delaware Asset Building group is working on two major asset-building initiatives: Instituting First State Saves, which was launched by Delaware Money School as part of the America Saves¹² nationwide campaign (a national campaign that encourages low-income people to establish banking relationships and savings accounts), and promoting the “Alliance for Economic Inclusion.”¹³

Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Office of Financial Education (www.moneysbestfriend.com) was instituted in 2004 by the Governor’s Task Force for Working Families. This result was directly impacted by the work of a task force asset-building coalition group that focused on studying asset-building issues and initiatives in the state. The Pennsylvania OFE works to

¹⁰ CFED’s Assets Opportunity Scorecard, which was recently updated for 2007-2008, has shown remarkable success in assisting in “scoring” states, based on the existence or lack of assets policies and laws. This report tool can be found on CFED’s website at: <http://www.cfed.org/focus.m?parentid=2&siteid=2471&id=2471>.

¹¹ Retrieved from APIC’s web page on March 15, 2008, at: <http://www.assetpolicy.org/policy.vp.html>.

¹² America Saves is a nationwide campaign involving around 20,000 enrolled savers and 1,000 non-profit groups, employers, financial institutions, and government agencies working at local, state, and national levels to encourage and assist individuals to save and build wealth. See: http://www.americasaves.org/back_page/who_we_are.cfm.

¹³ Source: America Saves. The Alliance for Economic Inclusion is FDIC’s national initiative to establish broad-based coalitions of financial institutions, community-based organizations and other partners in nine markets across the country to bring all unbanked and underserved populations into the financial mainstream (for more information go to: <http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/community/AEI/index.html>).

increase the availability and quality of financial education and related resources in Pennsylvania's schools, communities, and workplaces.¹⁴

Kansas: The Kansas Partners for Asset-Building Coalition (KPAD) is currently promoting a recently initiated state-supported program called K.I.D.S. (Kansas Investments Developing Scholars), which is administered by the Kansas State Treasurer's Office. K.I.D.S. reaches out to Kansans with Federal AGI incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, with program participants receiving matches of up to \$600 a year from the state when they make deposits and invest in Learning Quest, the Kansas 529 Education Savings Program. The coalition is encouraging lawmakers to appropriate continued funding for the initiative, and community-based organizations to aggressively market the initiative.¹⁵

Massachusetts: The Massachusetts IDA Solutions is a statewide collaborative of community-based non-profit organizations that help working low-income residents in Massachusetts to build assets and achieve greater economic stability. The collaborative was successful in influencing the state to create and staff an Asset Development Commission in 2007. The Commission is intended to make assets policy recommendations for low-income people in the state. The collaborative was also instrumental in securing ongoing and increasing state funding for IDAs in Massachusetts.¹⁶

Characteristics of Effective Asset-Building Coalitions

Developing an assets coalition is a time consuming effort, and requires collaborating partners to engage in an often-times challenging process. Through working with and studying many state-level assets coalitions, CSD has determined that there are some key characteristics that factor into increasing the chances for effectiveness and successes of asset-building coalition efforts. Only a handful of currently active state assets coalitions possess all of the characteristics listed below (which is not a comprehensive list of all desirable characteristics), but all active assets coalitions will likely find themselves facing the challenge of establishing these types of characteristics to achieve maximum effectiveness. These characteristics include:

- **Common goals for the coalition are established by members.** Members of asset-building coalitions must determine and share common goals and purposes to achieve longevity and be most successful. Common definitions of terms and at least basic understandings of the asset-building concepts they promote must also be agreed upon to some degree, assisting members in projecting unified messages to policymakers, funding partners, and constituents.
- **Early establishment of ongoing coalition leadership occurred.** Once consensus is achieved on the goals and purposes of the coalition, some form of ongoing leadership must be established or many coalition members will likely fall away. This type of leadership most often comes from one or more coalition members who designate a considerable amount of time (or staff time) towards forwarding the coalition's efforts –

¹⁴ Source: AmericaSaves.

¹⁵ For more information please visit the K.I.D.S. website at: <http://www.KansasStateTreasurer.com/KIDS>.

¹⁶ See the MIDAS website at: <http://www.massassets.org/index.html>.

typically supported by resources (often in-kind) from their own organizations. These established leaders are often instrumental in gaining ongoing support for the coalition's work.

- **Special dedication to purpose is exhibited by a core group of coalition members.** Members would ideally represent diverse organizations and populations in the state represented by the coalition (including all minority groups), with a significant number attending as many meetings as possible, and participating in coalition activities and purposes. However, not every member will attend every meeting or serve on a coalition committee – so for coalition goals to be realized a core group of specially dedicated members (perhaps structured as an executive board or committee) will likely have to work extra hard to keep group momentum and a sense of purpose going.
- **Establishment of connections with well-known asset-building intermediaries has been made.** Connections should be made between assets coalitions and state and national asset-building intermediary organizations. These intermediaries may assist the coalitions in gaining focus and finding consensus on developing promising assets policy agendas, seeking funding for activities, and determining what actions and political will might be needed to realize determined goals and policy agendas.
- **Operational resources have been secured.** It is essential that at least some resources are secured for the ongoing operation and activities of the coalition, if coalition goals are to be realized. Resources are needed for such key components and activities as paid staff, communications, holding regular meetings, and offering special convenings and trainings. They may also be needed for purposes such as reimbursing travel expenses for coalition members to attend legislative functions, coalition meetings and other member convenings, establishing a web site, and creating and distributing pertinent materials for the coalition and others.
- **Open lines of communications have been established.** Communications among coalition members, with key partners and policymakers, and with the state population at large, must be established if the coalition is to do its work most effectively – imparting a common and powerful message that helps create credibility for the group and establish general consensus in local areas, states, or regions about the benefits of instituting assets policies.
- **Educational venues and activities related to both establishing asset-building policies and initiatives and ongoing group expertise have been developed or negotiated.** Available educational and training opportunities are key to generating greater understanding of, and interest in, asset-building policies and initiatives among coalition members, key partners, and state populations in general. Also, these types of activities can be used to establish relationships with key state policymakers and advocates who can assist the coalition in conveying positive messages about inclusive asset-building policies to the widest possible audience.

Inclusion and State Assets Coalitions

Creating the will for and actuating public policies that institute greater asset-building opportunities for people at all income levels is the main goal for most state-level asset-building coalitions. Assets coalitions usually hope to serve all population groups in states. However, the leadership of more and more state-level asset-building coalitions is becoming aware that their membership does not represent as many diverse populations as they would like (including such population groups and communities as people in very rural areas, children, foster youth, all minorities, Native American reservations, people with disabilities, refugees, and immigrants).

Lack of diverse representation in state assets coalitions may create a negative political impact in states, compromising and diminishing the opportunities for broad legislative engagement. Legislators seek to know if all their constituents are being represented by policy coalition groups – and if policymakers perceive that their constituents are not being represented, interest in supporting related policy initiatives is curbed. If these diverse groups and constituents become better represented by state assets coalitions, the coalitions would likely become more powerful forces in establishing public and political will for inclusive asset-building policies and initiatives in states.

When pressed to address the issue and challenge of establishing diverse inclusiveness in asset-building coalitions, many leaders admit that they have not been able to figure out how to make their membership as diverse as possible, even though they want such diversity (Heffern, Kagotho, & Edwards, 2006). Many coalitions have initiated membership outreach efforts to a wide variety of organizations and population groups in their states but have still been unable to achieve the diversity they seek. In these cases, it may be that lack of knowledge of, and experience in working with, many core groups that comprise the coalition may be the greatest impediment for recruiting diverse organizations or communities. Previous or ongoing working relationships between at least some coalition organizations and the diverse organizations they wish to recruit are important for successful recruitment efforts. Diverse non-profit organizations may also be wary of putting effort into supporting unfamiliar policies or initiatives, if their funds and staffing are scarce – even if they seem appealing at first glance. This is especially likely to be the case with policies that are not currently established in their communities, or that include policy impediments that may be particular to their populations.

Due in large part to the perception that the asset-building needs in their communities may not be completely understood or fully met by existing state assets coalitions, some minority groups and special populations are establishing their own assets coalitions. Two prominent examples of population groups that have initiated special efforts towards establishing asset-building coalitions are Native American communities and organizations advocating for people with disabilities.

Native American Assets Coalitions

Native American assets coalitions have sprung up from both the will of Native peoples across the country to rebuild and regain control of assets in their communities, and as a result of a number of effective Native-focused asset-building initiatives and research projects developed and implemented by Native-serving intermediary groups and academic centers such as First Nations Development Institute, First Nations Oweesta Corporation, CSD, CFED, Native Nations Institute, and the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies. The four most active

Native American assets coalitions developed to date are the Native Financial Education Coalition, or NFEC (a national effort, led by First Nations Oweesta Corporation, in Rapid City, South Dakota; NFEC seeks to create opportunities for instituting financial education and other asset-building initiatives in Native communities), the Arizona Native Assets Coalition (ANAC), the Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition (ONAC), and the Northwest Area Native Asset Building Coalition, headquartered in Seattle, Washington.

In Washington State and Arizona (two states served by Native-led coalitions), active mainstream (that seek to serve the general population) state-level assets coalitions are active as well. The Native coalitions do not seek to compete with other assets coalitions in these states, but wish to become partners and collaborators with them, particularly on asset-building policy and program development efforts. Research has shown that Native American communities are not generally sought out to be partners in assets coalition building efforts in states, just as they are not generally sought to be partners in state-level efforts to institute IDA or other assets policies (King, Hicks, Edwards, et al., 2003).

Native assets coalitions hope to act in solidarity with other assets coalitions in states and regions, to develop policies that are designed to serve Native peoples, and advocate for increased funding opportunities for asset-building initiatives in their communities. Federally recognized Native Nations are also sovereign nations, with governmental, judicial, and policy responsibilities for their communities, which makes it doubly important that Native and non-Native assets coalitions work together – so that the resultant policy changes at both the Native Nation and state government levels work together in complementary ways.

Native American-developed and led assets coalitions bring distinctive cultural perspectives to both asset-building policy and program development. Native assets coalitions rate the effectiveness of asset-building initiatives and policies based on how well they serve Native peoples unique experiences and community goals: seeking to create assets policies and programs that address cultural and legal conditions that specifically affect the asset-building efforts of Native Americans living on American Indian reservations and urban communities, in Alaska Native villages, and on Native Hawaiian homelands.

Asset Coalitions for People with Disabilities

People with disabilities also face unique policy and program challenges for building assets. The National Disabilities Institute (NDI), located in Washington, D.C., has hosted a number of state-level seminars on better identifying and understanding both asset-building opportunities and challenges for people with disabilities. Key stakeholders and policymakers in various states attend these meetings (representing both the disabilities and non-disabilities communities), including the World Institute on Disabilities, a national intermediary organization that has worked for many years to advocate for greater wealth-building opportunities for people with disabilities¹⁷ – coming together to assess ways to better assist people with disabilities in accumulating assets, and strategize ways to make state and federal asset-building policies more friendly to the disabilities community. Another goal of this project is to encourage participants to

¹⁷ See more information in WID's EQUITY newsletter at: <http://www.wid.org/programs/access-to-assets/equity>

develop partnerships in states (perhaps coalitions) that will to continue to meet and work together to address the special circumstances of people with disabilities.¹⁸

Asset Coalitions for Other Populations

There are several other state and national organizations that are dedicated to creating specific asset-building coalition, networking, and learning opportunities for organizations working with specific populations groups. Some of these efforts include the Office of Refugee Resettlement's IDA Program,¹⁹ an initiative titled: "Building a Coalition in the Black Belt States for an Inclusive Asset-Building Policy and Program Agenda: Focusing on Victims of Katrina, Rita, and other Recent Hurricanes, and Black-Owned Land Loss," led by the Tuskegee Institute, in Alabama (CSD collaborates on this initiative),²⁰ and the National Council of LaRaza's Asset Development Initiative.²¹ As more and more minority populations address the many wealth-building policy and program disparities and historical inequities not often addressed by more mainstream assets coalitions and intermediaries, this trend will likely continue and efforts expand exponentially.

Therefore, efforts to establish population-specific assets coalitions in states are likely to increase, and if partnerships between general population-focused and specific population-focused coalitions do not also increase, key opportunities for addressing wealth-building issues faced by specific population groups, created by historical and current policy inequities, may be lost. State governments could institute more effective asset-building policies for all people in their states if they work to establish and increase engagement in, and funding appropriations for, the valuable efforts of advocacy groups working directly with, or in close partnership with, diverse and underserved populations.

¹⁸ See more about this work, which has taken place in Florida, and is planned for Ohio and North Carolina, at: <http://www.ndi-inc.org/initiatives.html>

¹⁹ See more information about the ORR IDA Program at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/data/05arc5.htm>.

²⁰ See more information about this initiative on CSD's website at: <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/policy/Tuskegee/Tuskegee.htm>.

²¹ See more about this initiative on LaRaza's website at: <http://www.nclr.org/content/programs/detail/1138/>

Case Study: Gulf Coast Asset Building Regional Coalition

The G. W. Carver Agricultural Experiment Station at Tuskegee University, with assistance from the Center for Social Development at The Brown School of Social Work, at Washington University, is currently leading a project to mobilize key stakeholders in the Southern Black Belt Region of the United States towards developing a regional asset-building coalition*. The initial phases of this project have been completed.

The coalition represents a broad constituency of members located in the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida, part of the “Black Belt States.” Coalition members include the G.W. Carver Agricultural Experiment Station at Tuskegee University, Center for Social Development at Washington University in St. Louis, universities partnering with the Southern Food Systems and Education Consortium, or SOFSEC, which include Alcorn State, Florida A&M, Southern University in Baton Rouge, and Tuskegee Universities, Florida Family Network, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, Alabama Arise, and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives.

Tuskegee University serves as the convener of this project and the related coalition-building efforts, holding periodic meetings in the four key participating states. Meeting objectives include disseminating information, raising awareness on wealth creation programs and policies, and building partnerships that support the development and goals of the coalition. The aim of the coalition is to advocate for the implementation of a wide spectrum of asset building initiatives and policies in the region. Examples of possible asset-building initiatives include: children’s savings accounts, state-level earned income tax credits (EITC), state-funded individual development accounts (IDA), anti-predatory lending laws, savings accounts targeting education and small business development, and financial education programs.

The Black Belt Region is so-called because it is home to a large population of African Americans who reside in the area. It is also home to a disproportionately high number of low-income individuals, children, and families, many of whom are people of color. Natural disasters, such as recent hurricanes, have further devastated this already economically struggling area. In all, there are eleven states identified as “Black Belt States,” but the efforts of this project are presently being directed towards the four previously mentioned states located along the Gulf Coast, that were most significantly devastated by recent hurricanes.

The Ford Foundation supports this initiative, which is projected to assist the development of the regional coalition through May 2010.

* For more information on the coalition please contact Gena Gunn, State and Regional Assets Policy Project Director, CSD, at ggunn@wustl.edu.

Resources for State Assets Coalitions

Non-profit organizations and philanthropies have been the greatest proponents and supporters of state- and tribal-level assets coalitions to date, providing the lion's share of resources. Besides providing monetary support, several program directors and representatives of key philanthropies in the asset-building field have devoted a considerable amount of time and effort into such coalition-supporting activities as attending meetings and sharing expertise, and working directly with coalition leaders on strategy plans.

However, a few state governments, including Washington and Oregon, are starting to provide some support for assets coalition activities. A number of states have invested significant resources into the creation of reports and publications intended to educate state policymakers and constituents about existing and potential policy incentives for creating greater asset-building opportunities for low-income populations.

In addition, some states have established policies intended to create asset-building policy task forces or committees to consider and create assets policy agendas, including New Mexico and Massachusetts. However, actual funding appropriations for these legislative efforts were often not made, or appropriated funding was not able to be fully utilized. If more states and tribal governments would make investments of support to asset-building coalition efforts, the characteristics of effectiveness listed above would be more likely to fully materialize, and more studied and effective asset-building policies would be created.

A growing body of publications, products, and services is available to assist existing and developing state-level assets coalitions. A number of national intermediary organizations, philanthropies, think tanks, academic centers, and consultants are assisting state-level policymakers and asset-building coalitions to create asset-building policy agendas, and institute asset-building policies. These efforts are based largely on various types of determinations of what state-level asset-building opportunities, and lack of opportunities, already exist, and what is missing. Related publications created by these alliances are designed to suggest effective assets policy and advocacy strategies and solutions for states.

Along these lines, several publications and tools intended to assist asset-building coalitions and other advocacy groups have been published in the last several years by entities such as CSD, the New America Foundation, CFED, the Institute on Assets and Social Policy (IASP), the National Governor's Association, the National Council of State Legislators, and others.²² CFED's Assets Opportunities Scorecard for the States has been used effectively by several state assets coalitions and task forces to get a baseline read on how their asset-building policy efforts are rated by an outside source.²³

A number of state-level assets policy reports detail opportunities and challenges related to asset building for specific states and offer state-level policy assessments and recommendations. The

²² See addenda item on "Resources Available for Assets Coalitions."

²³ These states include Illinois, Arkansas, North Carolina, Connecticut, and New York State (you can find published materials on these and other state efforts by accessing the Assets Opportunities Scorecard online at <http://www.cfed.org/focus.m?parentid=31&siteid=2471&id=2472>).

state asset-building task forces and coalitions that produced or assisted in producing these reports include California, Delaware, Hawai'i, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, with a number of state-level groups currently in the process of completing additional reports. In many of these states, asset-building coalition leaders have expanded their efforts beyond their own state boundaries by voluntarily assisting other states in instituting asset-building policies including California and Illinois.

National meetings focused on building state-level assets coalitions also occur periodically, offering venues for assets coalitions (in various stages of development) to network and learn from the experiences of others. One select group of state-level assets coalitions, representing assets policy leaders in eight states, met in Chicago in August 2006, by invitation of the Illinois Asset Building Group (IABG), to participate in a discussion of best practices and challenges related to their respective assets policy and coalition-building work. The meeting, hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago with support from the Ford and Levi Strauss Foundations, yielded a report that reflects the group's advice on identifying and addressing challenges typically faced in developing, promoting, and supporting assets policies. The meeting resulted in the formation of the "Learning Circle," which is comprised of meeting participants who hope to continue networking and gaining new insights in future convenings (See Shriver Center, 2007).

Organizations such as CSD, IASP, the New America Foundation, and CFED also work to connect state assets policy development to federal assets policy development. Design of federal IDA policies, such as the Section 404(h) in the Social Security Act of 1996, and the Assets for Independence Act of 1998 (AFI),²⁴ were greatly informed by state IDA policies (Edwards & Mason, 2003). AFIA was recently reauthorized, with advocacy groups from many states making recommendations for change and improvement to the Act (some of which were incorporated into the recently reauthorized act).

Connecting state and federal policies serves to increase funding sources for assets initiatives in states and establishes state and federal funding partnerships for asset-building policies. As states begin to test the efficacy of such policy initiatives as children's savings plans, state EITC policies, and matched college savings plans, state and federal partnerships will be key to ensuring appropriate funding. Consequently, state assets policy agendas developed by state-level assets coalitions are doubly important and valuable to the wealth-building efforts of the nation as a whole.

Recommendations for Increasing the Effectiveness of State-level Asset-Building Coalitions

1. Governments should partner with philanthropies, businesses, and private citizens to create a national pool of funding for states and other population groups who wish to initiate or increase the efforts of asset-building coalitions. A significant amount of start-up funding could be awarded to assets coalitions for a two-year period, which would then be reduced by half for annual renewable periods after that time – up to five years, with coalitions expected to capture at least a share of their own funding after the first two years. Initial awards could be adjusted for states with low or high tax bases, and state or

²⁴ See more information on AFI at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/afi/>

tribal budget surpluses or deficits. Awards could also be adjusted depending on the percentage of state revenue used to serve communities of extreme poverty. These grants could also receive matching contributions from sources such as cities, counties, municipalities, tribal government associations, foundations, intermediaries, non-profit organizations, and private citizens.

2. Create a central venue (such as a website) for listing all known asset-building coalitions, their areas of focus, and their accomplishments. Assets coalitions could visit this site to learn about the effective activities of other asset-building coalitions, and to network. Self-reporting on the activities of these coalitions would include information on opportunities, challenges, and achievements of the coalitions, and could be compiled through the use of simple online recording forms. This site could be supported by governments or philanthropies, or a partnership of the two.
3. Require a membership fee for access to the assets coalition website, which will provide funds for a webmaster to monitor the site and communicate with members. Some information could be captured by a yearly survey – perhaps sent out by email with the annual membership fee reminder.
4. Perform a yearly update on publications written by or on behalf of asset-building coalitions, to be included on the above website. This information could be collected by self-reporting, or researched annually for the website by the web manager.
5. Create and post a listing of state legislators and tribal government leaders who are willing to speak to other lawmakers about establishing greater asset-building policy opportunities in their districts and communities. These leaders should have experience in creating and instituting assets policies that effectively serve all the populations in their communities, districts, or states (including those with low-incomes).
6. Create a guide for the website that connects state- and tribal-level assets policy strategies with federal strategies, better illustrating how these policies fit together, and what collaborative funding and program opportunities exist, or could potentially exist.
7. Create one consolidated list of recommended policy areas and initiatives for more effective state- and tribal-level asset-building policy development (from the several existing lists and additional publications by state policymakers and asset-building policy advocates), paying particular attention to considering how best to implement assets policy strategies within a variety of communities and budgetary situations.

CSD Conclusions about Asset-Building Coalition Efforts to Date

IDA coalitions, task forces, and collaboratives served as successful venues for considering, developing, and implementing IDA policies and initiatives in states. As these coalitions became more aware of the necessity of instituting additional policies, they began to shift efforts towards establishing a more broad asset-building policy agenda, supporting a number of additional assets

policies in states. The goal of this broader agenda was based on the desire to assist IDA savers to more effectively achieve asset ownership and preserve their assets (Zdenek & Stein, 2001).

Some state asset-building coalitions devote advocacy efforts to only a few asset-building policies, such as IDAs and the EITC, as a foundation on which to eventually establish a more broad assets policy agenda. Other state assets coalitions are considering a range of policies, based on policy indicators of successful implementation of asset-building policies for low-income residents. These coalitions are creating ambitious assets policy agendas that are intended to encourage expansion of effective assets policies and the institution of new policies as needed.

State-level asset-building coalitions and the resultant policy agendas would benefit greatly from increasing the diversity of their memberships. These members would be able to contribute information about particular populations groups that affect wealth-building efforts. State, Tribal, and federal governments could work together more effectively to inform a national inclusive asset-building policy agenda by funding state-level asset-building policy coalition efforts and better publicizing these efforts.

There are some key characteristics of state-level assets coalition design and membership, including commonly established goals, established leadership, adequate resources, and ongoing learning opportunities, that may make the efforts of asset-building coalitions more effective. It would greatly benefit states to assist both established and newly forming assets coalitions to better develop these characteristics.

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- Warren, N. & Edwards, K. (2005). *Status of state supported IDA programs in 2005* (CSD Policy Report 05-03). St. Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development.
- Zdenek, R. O., & Stein, B. (2003). *Recommendations from the field: Individual development accounts as part of a universal asset-building system* (CSD Policy Report). St. Louis, MO: Washington University, Center for Social Development.

Appendix A: Selected State and Other Large Scale Asset-Building Coalition Websites

Arizona Native Assets Coalition: The Arizona Native Assets Coalition is a group of Arizona tribes, Native non-profit organizations, state agencies, and other partner organizations working together to promote the development of asset building and financial education programs and policy for Native people at the tribal, state, and federal levels. (<http://www.aznativeassets.org/>)

Assets for Arizona Alliance: AAA is a coalition of various state, non-profit, and private organizations devoted to increasing opportunities for IDA program development and other asset-building initiatives and policies in the state. (<http://www.assetsaz.org/Alliance.htm>)

Arkansas: The Arkansas Assets Coalition was started in 2000 after the Arkansas Individual Development Account (IDA) legislation was passed. Since then, the coalition has focused on crafting successful IDA programs across Arkansas through technical assistance and capacity-building. (<http://www.arassetpolicy.org/index.asp>)

California: The Asset Policy Initiative of California is a statewide network (coalition) of stakeholders committed to increasing asset-building opportunities for working families. The site features a policy framework that identifies a continuum of asset-building strategies. (<http://www.assetpolicy-ca.org>)

Illinois: The Illinois Asset Building Group is a diverse statewide coalition advancing children's savings accounts and other asset-building policies that build the stability and strength of Illinois families and communities. (<http://www.illinoisassetbuilding.org/>)

Maryland: The Maryland Asset Building Initiative work falls into four main categories: (1) connecting asset building, workforce, and community development groups in Baltimore City and state-wide; (2) connecting free tax preparation sites and asset development programs state-wide; (3) strengthening existing asset development programs and innovating new products; and (4) creating an assets policy agenda. (http://www.mdchildcare.org/mdcfc/pdfs/md_asset_building.pdf)

Massachusetts: The Midas Collaborative is a statewide collaborative of community-based, nonprofit organizations that help working low-income residents in Massachusetts build assets and achieve greater economic stability. (<http://www.massassets.org/index.html>)

Michigan: The Michigan Asset Building Policy Project (ABPP), facilitated by the Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), was created by the Asset Building Coalition (ABC) for Michigan – a diverse group of approximately 45 offices and agencies including bipartisan legislators, state agencies, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations. The coalition met over a six month period hoping to increase policy opportunities for asset ownership in Michigan, starting with the express purpose of creating a report (see State Asset-Building Coalition Reports) outlining new and existing state assets policy options with the greatest potential to help working poor households build assets. (<http://www.cedam.info/ABC.htm>)

Missouri: The Missouri Asset Development Committee (MADC) of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW) supports the economic empowerment of low-income people and their communities through “human sized” economic development strategies. The strategies foster local self-determination, build local economies, and provide individual asset development focusing on microenterprise development, individual development accounts, first time homeownership, and earned income tax credits. (<http://www.masw.org/programs/asset.php>)

Montana, North and South Dakota, and Wyoming: The Northern Plains Initiative of Rural Dynamics is a coalition of community organizations and governmental agencies working together to create a long-range plan for economic equity for rural communities and their residents. The coalition is focusing on bringing together strategically connected community leaders with the key tribal, federal, and state officials to develop and implement policy. (<http://www.plainstalk.org/index.html>)

New Mexico: New Mexico Assets Consortium (NMAC) is a consortium of non-profit organizations helping low-income New Mexicans obtain and retain assets. Community Action New Mexico provides management and development for a network of community based service providers who are able to offer asset formation opportunities to their customers. Leading partners include The New Mexico Project for Financial Literacy and TAX HELP New Mexico. (<http://www.communityactionnewmexico.org/assets/index.html>)

Oregon: The Oregon Asset Policy Initiative (OAPI), led by the Cascade Policy Institute of Oregon, is a state-wide effort to increase economic opportunity for Oregon families. OAPI intends to build policies in which families succeed through asset accumulation, collaborating across political lines. Through comprehensive research, coalition building, and strategic policy planning, this innovative project offers low-income families greater asset-building opportunities. (http://www.cascadepolicy.org/?page_id=250)

Texas: RAISE Texas was incorporated in 2007. It was formally known as the Texas Asset Building Coalition. RAISE Texas fosters effective and sustainable initiatives that help individuals and families escape poverty by increasing personal finance skills and building assets. (<http://www.covenantcapital.org/html/publicpolicy/idanetwork.html>)

Washington: The Washington Asset Building Coalition (WABC) came together in October 2006 to expand asset building across the state. Over 50 organizations are involved and helped gain \$2.8 million from the Legislature for asset-building initiatives for low-income families in 2007-09. (<http://www.cted.wa.gov/site/994/default.aspx>)

Washington, DC: Capital Area Asset Builders creates opportunities for people of all incomes to improve their financial management skills, increase their savings, and build wealth. The organization believes that a prosperous community is one in which everyone has incentives and opportunities to save for the future. (<http://caab.org/index.php>)

Appendix B: State Asset-Building Coalition/Policy Reports:**California**

McCulloch, Heather. *Wealth Data Inventory*. San Francisco: APIC, 2004. (http://www.assetpolicy-ca.org/fckfiles/File/APIC_DataInventory_November2004.pdf). *Wealth Data Inventory* is designed to aid practitioners and policy makers in education and advocacy efforts on asset building nationally. The data is organized to provide statistics at the national and California state level, and according to sections of the APIC policy framework.

Delaware

The State of Delaware. *The Final Report of the Governor's Task Force on Financial Independence*. June 2002. (http://www.state.de.us/governor/publications/financial_independence_final_report.pdf)

Hawaii

The Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development. *Asset Policy Roadmap: A Strategy for Advancing Financial Security and Opportunity in Hawai'i*. 2008. This report outlines four asset policy priorities that, taken together, would significantly help working families in Hawaii build wealth and assets. (<http://www.hacbed.org/documents/AssetPolicyRoadmap2008.pdf>)

Illinois

Rand, Dory. *Financial Education and Asset Building Programs for Welfare Recipients and Low Income Workers: The Illinois Experience*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, April 2004. (http://www.brookings.edu/urban/pubs/20040413_doryrand.pdf).

Millett, Ricardo. *Statewide Initiative in Illinois to Build the Assets of Low-Income Families*. Waltham, MA: Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, December 2005. (http://www.community-wealth.org/_pdfs/articles-publications/state-assets/article-millett.pdf)

Massachusetts

Venner, Sandra. *Asset-Building Policies in Massachusetts*. Waltham, MA: Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, November 2006. (<http://iasp.brandeis.edu/pdfs/Asset%20Building%20Policies%20in%20MA%20Nov%202006.pdf>)

Michigan

Asset Building Coalition (ABC) for Michigan. *Helping Working Families Achieve Financial Security*. Lansing, MI: Asset Building Policy Project, January 2006. ABC's report, resulting from a six-month series of meetings, outlines new and existing state policy options with the greatest potential to help working poor households build assets toward becoming more financially secure. ([http://www.cedam.info/docs/Asset_Building_Jan06\(Final%20Report\).pdf](http://www.cedam.info/docs/Asset_Building_Jan06(Final%20Report).pdf))

Missouri and Kansas (MOKANSave Asset-Building Coalition)

Kagotho, Njeri, and Gena Gunn. *The Missouri-Kansas Asset-Building Coalition and Policy Project: An Initiative in Cross-State Policy Making for Wealth Building*. St. Louis, MO: Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis, January 2005.

(<http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/Publications/2005/R05-08.pdf>). MOKANSave, launched in February 2002, was a four-year collaborative assets coalition building project between the Center for Social Development (CSD) and the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW), in Missouri, in partnership with Heart of America Family Services and El Centro, Inc., in Kansas.

North Carolina

The North Carolina Asset-Building Policy Task Force framed a “*set of asset-building policy recommendations*” on ways to maintain and strengthen the state’s current policy framework to support asset building. This document is a work in progress, and participation in Task Force meetings doesn’t necessarily imply individual organization endorsement of each recommendation. A more comprehensive report is due in early 2008.

(<http://www.ncidacollaborative.org/07conference/NCABPTFpdf.pdf>)

Pennsylvania

Governor’s Task Force for Working Families. *Dollars and Sense: Realistic Ways Policymakers can Help Pennsylvania’s Working Families*. January 2005.

(http://www.banking.state.pa.us/banking/lib/banking/about_dob/special%20initiatives/task%20force%20for%20working%20families/5.2.5%20task%20force%20for%20working%20families%20report.pdf)

State asset-building policy reports currently under development

Connecticut – Commissioned by Voices for Children, to be completed by Spring 2008.

Kansas – Commissioned by the Kansas Action for Children and informed by the Kansas Partners for Asset Development, to be completed by November 2008.

Appendix C: Selected Publications on Asset-Building Coalition Policy Advocacy Work

- CFED. (2007). Assets opportunity scorecard, 2007.
(<http://www.cfed.org/focus.m?parentid=31&siteid=2471&id=2471>)
- Heffern, J. (2008). *Active partnerships: Working together and working for the field* (CSD Conference Report). G. Gunn and K. Edwards (Eds.) St. Louis, MO: Washington University, Center for Social Development. (<http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/publications/2008/RP08-10.pdf>)
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Appendix D: Selected National Intermediary Websites

America Saves is a national campaign that encourages people to save and build wealth. (<http://www.americasaves.org>)

The Aspen Institute's Initiative on Financial Security was initiated to address America's asset crisis, hoping to give all Americans opportunities to own homes, finance college, and prepare for a secure retirement. (<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/Program1.asp?i=106&bid=0>)

The Center for Social Development is a research center based at the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo. One of CSD's main bodies of work focuses on asset-based policy development, particularly focusing on state- and tribal-level asset-building policy issues, through the State Assets Policy Project (SAPP). (<http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/csd/index.htm>)

CFED expands economic opportunity by helping Americans start and grow businesses, go to college, own a home, and save for their children's and own economic futures. (<http://www.cfed.org>)

FDIC's Money Smart Program is an adult financial education program that helps people build financial knowledge and develop financial confidence, to assist them in understanding and utilizing financial services more effectively. (<http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/index.html>)

First Nations Development Institute (Native assets coalition work) is working to restore Native control and culturally-compatible stewardship of the assets they own – be they land, human potential, cultural heritage, or natural resources – and to establish new assets for ensuring the long-term vitality of Native communities. (<http://www.firstnations.org/>)

Insight Center for Community Economic Development (formerly NEDLC) a national research, consulting and legal organization that is committed to building economic health and opportunity in vulnerable communities. (<http://www.insightccd.org/>)

Institute on Assets and Social Policy is dedicated to the economic and social mobility of individuals and families, particularly those traditionally left out of the economic mainstream, and to the expansion of the middle class. (<http://www.iasp.brandeis.edu>)

The JumpStart Coalition is a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the financial literacy of kindergarten through college-age youth by providing advocacy, research, standards and educational resources. JumpStart strives to prepare youth for life-long successful financial decision-making. (<http://www.jumpstart.org>)

National Council of La Raza conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy, providing a Latino perspective in five key areas – assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health. (<http://www.nclr.org>)

National Disabilities Institute is a national research and development organization with the mission to promote income preservation and asset development for persons with disabilities and to build healthy financial futures for Americans with disabilities. (<http://www.ndi-inc.org>)

The Native Financial Education Coalition is group of local, regional, and national organizations and government agencies that have joined together for one purpose: to promote financial education in Native communities. (<http://www.nfec.info/>)

New American Foundation invests in outstanding individuals and policy ideas that transcend the conventional political spectrum. Through its fellowships and issue-specific programs, the Foundation sponsors a wide range of research, writing, conferences and public outreach on the most important global and domestic issues of our time. (<http://www.newamerica.net>)

Sagamore Institute for Policy Research is a center that provides information about asset-building tools and practices. (<http://www.sipr.org/default.aspx?action=PublicationDetails&id=413>)

The Urban Institute gathers and analyzes data, conducts policy research, evaluates programs and services, and educates Americans on critical issues and trends. (<http://www.urban.org>)

World Disabilities Institute is an international public policy center that advocates for the civil rights of people with disabilities and pushes for public policies that promote full inclusion of people with disabilities in society. (<http://www.wid.org>)