



As communities of faith, we are grounded in a shared tradition of justice and compassion; we are called upon to hold ourselves and our communities accountable to the moral standard of this tradition. As we look across our country today, we see a nation in which millions of people are lacking life's basic necessities; we see growing numbers of jobless individuals, and even more who work, but whose wages keep them below the poverty line. In addition, more and more people are turning to vital social services to make ends meet, including public health care, food stamps, subsidized housing, and assistance to deal with rising home energy costs.

Our common scriptures present a vision of shared responsibility that endows the notion of "work" with an inherent dignity, yet also commands that we care for the vulnerable among us.

Fighting Poverty with Faith is a diverse coalition of national and local faith organizations dedicated to cutting domestic poverty in half by 2020. To accomplish this goal, we are working aggressively to focus new attention to the causes of poverty, highlight strategies to reduce poverty, and create economic opportunities. The Fighting Poverty with Faith 2010 mobilization will focus on two key strategies:

1. Protecting critical human needs programs during these challenging economic times; and
2. Advocating for new policies that enable more families to find employment and move toward economic self-sufficiency.

Though we believe in responsible stewardship of our nation's resources, we are also committed to ensuring that the burden of deficit reduction is not placed on the backs of the most vulnerable members of our society. In addition, we will work for the development of positive economic opportunities for the millions of people who are out of work, underemployed, or displaced from their job.

To this end, the undersigned national faith-based organizations are committed to participating in an interfaith month of action in October 2010 in order to urge our elected officials to make poverty-reduction a key goal, and to protect the interests of the poor while creating economic opportunity for those most in need.

During the month of October, we will provide opportunities for local congregations, student organizations, faith-based service-providers, and other affiliates to engage in candidates' forums, community relations building activities, public education programs, interfaith volunteer projects, and advocacy efforts on the issues of shared economic prosperity and reducing poverty. By coordinating our messaging, holding joint events, and promoting partnerships among our respective faith groups, we hope to build the political and public will to reduce poverty.

Every day faith organizations serve individuals and families in need within our communities. But our efforts to sustain our brothers and sisters living in poverty must be complemented with a serious plan of action from our elected officials. By speaking out collectively during this month, we will build on our Fighting Poverty with Faith efforts from recent years. We hope that this third annual Fighting Poverty with Faith mobilization will expand the national conversation on the need to protect the needy among us and create economic opportunity for all citizens. It is critical that we create a mandate for our political leadership to aggressively pursue an anti-poverty agenda.