

Strengthening families and communities through Building, Owning and Protecting personal and financial assets

WHO WE ARE

The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law is a law and policy center that provides national leadership in identifying, developing and supporting innovative and collaborative approaches to achieve social and economic justice for low-income people.

The Shriver Center's Community Investment Unit (CIU) takes action against poverty by advocating for policies that expand asset-building opportunities for all. Through policy development and effective advocacy, the CIU helps communities avoid a cycle of debt, by creating asset-building opportunities, expanding ownership and protecting consumers.

CIU's advocacy and policy work on the local and national levels strengthen and enables families and communities to build, own and protect personal and financial assets.

WHAT ARE ASSETS?

Assets, both personal and financial, are the building blocks of long-term financial stability and success for people at all income levels. Assets include, but are not limited to, having a savings account, a college education, access to quality healthcare, and owning a home or a small business.

WHAT IS ASSET POVERTY

Poverty has two sides: income poverty and asset poverty. Currently, the federal government focuses solely on household income to measure poverty. CIU looks beyond income poverty to asset poverty. Assets, both personal and financial, increase long-term stability, financial success and upward mobility to help families end the inter-generational cycle of poverty. A household is asset poor if it does not have enough financial reserves to meet its expenses for three months if all outside sources of income were to be eliminated.

BUILDING ASSETS

Some of CIU's asset building efforts include:

- Leading policy efforts to expand financial programs for low-income people of all ages through public private and community partnerships.
- Eliminating asset limits in public programs to preserve financial growth.
- Co-chairing a statewide asset building coalition, the Illinois Asset Building Group (IABG).

EXPANDING OWNERSHIP

CIU's ownership activities include:

- Expanding opportunities for homeownership, small business development and postsecondary education.
- Advocating for state and federal policies to establish universal, progressive, matched children's savings accounts.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS

CIU helps protect consumers by:

- Advocating for consumer protection laws including anti-predatory mortgage lending, payday and consumer investment loan reform and discouraging tax refund anticipation loans.
- Supporting affordable healthcare, housing utilities, and transportation to avoid debt and increase assets.



Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

The Community Investment Unit at the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law implements the mission of the organization through innovative and collaborative public policy advocacy to enable low-income people and communities to move from poverty to prosperity.

From poverty to
prosperity



Sargent Shriver National Center on a Poverty Law
50 East Washington Street, Suite 500
Chicago, Illinois 60602
312.263.3830

www.povertylaw.org