

# Appleseed This Week

## DC Appleseed Report Offers Solutions to Combat High Poverty Rates in the District of Columbia

**April 17, 2008** - This week DC Appleseed released its report on Washington, D.C.'s working poor families, "**Hometown Prosperity: Increasing Opportunities for DC's Low-Income Working Families**," which describes the barriers these families face to economic advancement and lays out essential policy changes that could improve their situation.

The report points out that one in three working families in the District of Columbia lives at or below 200 percent of poverty -- \$31,000 for a family of three -- a rate much higher than in neighboring Maryland and Virginia. Three-quarters of the adults in DC's working poor families have a high school diploma, but only one-third has any post-secondary education. Because of this, DC Appleseed says, it is essential for the District to invest in accessible and affordable adult education and training opportunities that can launch these families into higher-paying careers.

"This project was designed to look at three different policy areas that affect the working poor -- adult education and training, economic development and conditions of existing employment," said **Judy Berman**, deputy director of DC Appleseed. "The District has strengths and weaknesses in all of these areas."

Primary recommendations from the report include preparing adult workers for "middle-skill" careers by developing a community college system; offering financial aid that makes existing adult education options accessible to working adults; increasing funding for adult literacy programs that are coupled with occupational training; and crafting a workforce development program that targets training resources on growing job sectors that offer good career paths for residents with limited skills. The report also encourages the adoption of policies that will improve income and job security for working poor families, such as providing tax relief in addition to the Earned Income Tax Credit, increasing reimbursement rates for child care providers to improve quality of early childhood programs, and encouraging financial institutions to limit costs to poor families and promote asset development.

The report has received wide coverage in the District of Columbia, including stories in the **Washington Post**, the **Washington Times**, the **DC Examiner**, **WAMU**, and the **Associated Press**. Next steps include co-hosting a forum on the topic of community college with the **Brookings Institution**.

Co-authored with the **DC Fiscal Policy Institute**, and with assistance from firms **Arnold & Porter**; **Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom**; and **Patton Boggs**, the report is part of the **Working Poor Families Project** -- a national effort by the **Annie E. Casey**, **Ford**, **Joyce** and **Charles Stewart Mott Foundations** to improve the economic security of the working poor.

**For more information on Appleseed, visit [www.appleseednetwork.org](http://www.appleseednetwork.org). To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).**

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