



Bear River Association of Governments
Community Action Services & Food Bank
Family Connection Center
Five County Association of Governments
Ogden-Weber Community Action Partnership
Salt Lake Community Action Program
Six County Association of Governments
Southeastern Utah Association of Governments
Uintah Basin Association of Governments
Utahns Against Hunger

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: September 9th, 2011

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FOLLOWING THE PRESIDENT'S JOB SPEECH, UTAH'S POVERTY FIGHTING NETWORK ASKS THAT JOB CREATION BE FOCUSED ON THOSE LIVING NEAR OR BELOW POVERTY

Salt Lake City, UT – Thursday night President Obama put forward to Congress, and the people of Utah, the *American Jobs Act*. In the President's own words, the plan purposes "to put more people back to work, and more money in the pockets of those who are working." Community Action Partnership of Utah (CAP Utah) strongly believes that those to whom the President refers are the people hit hardest in the current economy -- those living near or below the poverty level.

The unemployment rate in Utah has more than doubled over the past three years. In January 2008 the unemployment rate in Utah was 3.0%, compared to a 2011 rate of 7.6% during that same month.¹ Not surprisingly unemployment rate trends closely together with the poverty rate. Drew Martinez, Policy Analyst for CAP Utah, states: "Many people in Utah are unemployed for the first time in their lives and find themselves in poverty, or on the brink of poverty. This is putting far too many Utahns in crisis, trying to figure out how they can keep their homes, feed their kids, and subsist until they can find work."

In addition to a jobs plan that assists those unemployed in finding work, any effective plan should also address those underemployed in Utah. More and more full- and part-time workers are falling into poverty. A full-time worker making minimum wage (\$7.25/hr) brings in only \$15,080 a year. A single mother of two that works full-time for minimum wage would fall below the poverty line. Part-time workers struggle even more. In 2009, 16.2% of all part-time workers lived below the poverty line in Utah, compared to 2.3% of full-time workers.² CAP Utah expects that when the 2010 poverty numbers from the U.S. Census' Current Population Survey and American Community Survey are released on September 13th and 22nd respectively, the numbers will show even more working poor in Utah.

CAP Utah is encouraged to hear the President call in his jobs plan for the extension of unemployment insurance for another year, tax cuts for working families, and assistance for families to refinance their mortgages to stay in their homes. CAP Utah is also optimistic of initiatives in the *American Jobs Act* that seek to create the Pathways to Work Fund and the Neighborhood Stabilization Fund, along with transportation infrastructure investment. All these things combined could help those living with the tightest budgets receive relief.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Local Area Unemployment Statistics. 2007-2010.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey.

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As CAP Utah learns more about the *American Jobs Act*, and any other legislation that seeks to create jobs in the state of Utah, the association continually advocates for job creation to benefit those living near or below poverty. CAP Utah reiterates the President's urging that the people of Utah cannot wait 14 months until the next election. Action is needed now that seeks out the most disadvantaged in Utah and gives them the tools and resources to achieve in their efforts towards financial stability.

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Community Action Partnership of Utah's mission is to advocate for, support, and train Utah's CSBG funded agencies, utilizing our collective strength to eradicate poverty.

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