



PICO Network News

PICO National Network | *Unlocking the Power of People™*

Thursday, February 23, 2006

REBUILD LOUISIANA

Rebuild Louisiana Clergy Summit to kick off national campaign for federal assistance

PICO clergy from Louisiana have invited religious leaders from across the United States to come to New Orleans on March 16-18 to witness the devastation facing the region and launch a national clergy-led campaign to press the federal government to meet its commitments to help rebuild Louisiana. [Read more>>](#)

New Orleans families fight to return home

All Congregations Together (ACT) is holding public meetings in neighborhoods across New Orleans to give citizens from all parts of the city a say in how their communities are rebuilt. These meetings at local churches will culminate in a citywide Rebuild New Orleans Assembly on March 18. With thousands of families still waiting for temporary housing and rebuilding stalled, neighborhoods are being told that they must demonstrate their viability to planning officials by March 20. [Read more>>](#)

Creating hope in a city left to rot

There may be nothing more hopeful than attending a Sunday service at a packed church in a devastated neighborhood in New Orleans. When the sun is up on Saturday or Sunday, the city feels like it might be coming back to life. At sundown the lights go out and the reality of a city that has been left by government to rot sets in. [Read more>>](#)

NEW VOICES

Pressure helps limit damage to Medicaid

During the fall, PICO worked with health care advocacy groups in Washington to fight Medicaid changes that threatened to increase the number of uninsured children and families and reduce access to health care. While Congress ultimately approved significant new fees and benefit reductions, pressure helped preserve \$3.34 billion in funding for health care over five years and limited damage to the Medicaid program, which provides affordable health coverage to 50 million people. [Read more>>](#)

WINS AND CAMPAIGNS

Healthy Families

PICO California launches \$2.2 billion health care initiative

PICO California has joined a coalition of health advocacy groups to file an initiative designed to prevent teen smoking and raise more than \$2.27 billion annually for children's health, emergency rooms, anti-smoking programs, and disease prevention and treatment. PICO's 20 California federations are working to collect 120,000 signatures as part of the 1 million needed for the initiative to appear on the November 2006 ballot. [Read more>>](#)

Health Care Organizing Training Institute

PICO is holding a health care training institute on March 24-26 in Kansas City to strengthen local and state level efforts to expand access to health coverage and improve health outcomes. More than 75 leaders and community organizers are expected to attend.

Good Schools

San Jose supports alternative education for at-risk students

[People Acting in Community Together](#) in San Jose won commitments from state legislators to support legislation to provide greater funding for Community Day Schools that provide alternative education to at-risk and out-of-school youth. Under SB 1170, charter schools serving at-risk youth would qualify for \$11,000 per student instead of the average \$7,000-per-pupil funding schools receive on average.

[Read more>>](#)

California education institute brings together PICO and ACORN leaders

More than 120 leaders and staff from PICO California and California ACORN attended a three-day education institute in February in San Jose where they explored the connections between their local school reform work and statewide K-12 education policy. Teacher quality and supply was a key focus area, as participants addressed the shortage of qualified teachers in the state's highest need schools and explored programs and strategies to address this chronic problem. In August 2005 ACORN and PICO jointly sponsored a national education organizing training institute. [Read more>>](#)

Safe Neighborhoods

Allentown keeps up pressure for police reform

With Allentown facing a spate of homicides, Congregations United for Neighborhood Action (CUNA) is pushing the police department to engage community members in efforts to increase policing in high-crime neighborhoods. [Read more>>](#)

Housing Opportunities

Rochester Mayor supports Neighborhood Trust Fund and Crime Initiative

Interfaith Action leaders held a retreat with newly elected Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy to advance a \$90 million neighborhood trust fund, increase foot patrols in high crime areas, and create job opportunities for at-risk youth. [Read more>>](#)

New homeless shelter opens in Long Beach

Greater Long Beach Interfaith Community Organization led efforts to create a new Homeless shelter as part of a long-term effort to highlight and address homelessness in Long Beach, which has more than 6,000 homeless persons. [Read more>>](#)

Job Opportunities

Community organizer positions in four states

PICO federations in Alaska, California, Massachusetts and Missouri have job openings for community organizers. [Read more>>](#)