

Demos

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2009

JULY 1, 2008 TO JUNE 30, 2009

PROSPERITY
& OPPORTUNITY

REVITALIZING
GOVERNMENT

GLOBAL
ENGAGEMENT

HEALTHY
DEMOCRACY



dē·mōs'

A Greek Noun: “The Common People; the populace.”

Dēmos is a non-partisan public policy research and advocacy organization founded in 2000. Headquartered in New York City, Dēmos works with advocates and policy-makers around the country in pursuit of four overarching goals:

- a more equitable economy with widely shared prosperity and opportunity;
- a vibrant and inclusive democracy with high levels of voting and civic engagement;
- an empowered public sector that works for the common good;
- and responsible U.S. engagement in an interdependent world.

WHAT WE DO

A multi-issue national organization, Dēmos combines research, policy development, and advocacy to influence public debates and catalyze change. We publish books, reports, and briefing papers that illuminate critical problems and advance innovative solutions; work at both the national and state level with advocates and policymakers to promote reforms; help to build the capacity and skills of key progressive constituencies; project our values into the media by promoting Dēmos Fellows and staff in print, broadcast, and Internet venues; and host public events that showcase new ideas and leading progressive voices.

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Demos seeks to facilitate an open and fair debate about the kinds of new national guidance and rules that can ensure a stable domestic economy and fair international economic exchange in the future. We've begun this project by closely looking at failures in the home lending industry, with publishing several new reports in 2008 and hosting several events, including:

- A July 2008 DC event and report to carve out a path to recovery in the home market with a modernized and empowered regulatory system.
- A July 2008 report: *Beyond the Mortgage Meltdown: Addressing the Current Crisis, Avoiding a Future Catastrophe*.
- A Fall 2008 report: *The New Squeeze How a Perfect Storm of Bad Mortgages and Credit Card Debt Could Paralyze the Recovery*.
- A November 2008 event in New York as part of our Charles Halpern Series on business and society entitled "Beyond the Meltdown: Where Did the Financial System Go Wrong? How Do We Set it Right?"
- A new book, *Up To Our Eyeballs: How Shady Lenders and Failed Economic Policies are Drowning Americans in Debt*, exposing predatory and unfair lending practices and telling the stories of people affected by them.

A New Opportunity Contract for America's Young Adults

Demos has launched a multi-year **Next Generation Opportunity Project** to examine the economic realities of America's young people. This project is building a national network of advocates and engaged young people to support state- and federal-level policies that create a path to the future middle class, and which does so for successive generations. The groundwork for this project was laid in 2008 with several key developments:

- **A Better Deal: Reclaiming Economic Security for A New Generation Conference**, held in Washington, DC, on May 8-9, brought together more than 20 national partners and hundreds of advocates from around the country to discuss the economic concerns of young America: college access and affordability, creating and maintaining good jobs, healthcare, costs of starting a family, and creating a broad-based

movement to keep these issues at the forefront of our politics.

- Publication of the *Economic State of Young America*, the first of Demos' biennial reports on the trends that affect America's 20- and 30-somethings, and *A Better Deal Handbook*, a guide to help mobilize the growing national advocacy network around young adult fiscal issues.

Making the Case to Rebuild the Path to a Stable Middle Class

Recognizing that there has been no clear measurement of the true financial stability of America's middle class, Demos, along with our partners at the Institute on Assets and Social Policy at Brandeis University, developed the **Middle Class Economic Security Index**. This new tool measures the financial well-being of America's households along key measurements not reflected together in the usual single-factor indexes: budget, income, assets, healthcare coverage and educational attainment.

In addition to a foundational report, *By a Thread: The New Experience of America's Middle Class*, we published additional reports examining middle class security across age, race and income demographics, and comparing stability between points in time. Through this work, we're trying to help our policymakers understand "who's in, who's out and who's barely holding on" in order to build support for broad-based policy solutions that will create a large and economically stable middle class now and for future generations.



Demos' Jennifer Wheary talks about the state of the African-American and Latino Middle Class and a new report based on the Middle Class Economic Security Index on NBC Nightly News.

Working for...A Democracy Where the People's Voices and Votes Count

Democratic institutions are the foundation of the United States. The ways in which Americans are represented and have their voice heard—by casting a vote, through elective government, through civic institutions and now, more than ever, through technology that engages people on critical national, state or local issues—should be a constant focus for our policymakers at the state and national level.

Demos envisions a political system in which the voices of all Americans—in all of the diversity of opinion and experience in this country—are heard loud and clear. We believe that the public institutions and innovations that help the people to be heard, especially underrepresented and marginalized people, should be invested in, modernized and, in a legal context, enforced vigorously.

Through the work of the **Democracy Program** and several Fellows, Demos is promoting a set of policies and innovations that give more people a voice—researching and promoting policy to correct the many problems that still plague our voting process, engaging directly in the states to move reform in partnership with state-based advocates, reframing the debate about integrity in elections and replacing scare tactics with facts, exploring and supporting new ways social media is used as a tool of democracy, and working vigorously with legislators in the nation's Capitol and the White House to build on renewed civic momentum.



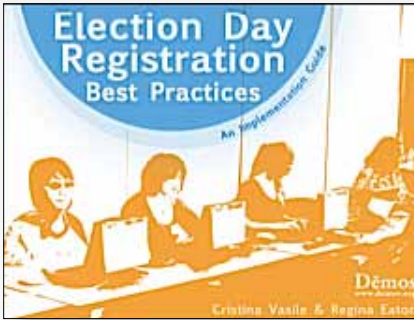
Demos' Steven Carbo and Miles Rapoport discuss allegations of voter fraud on CNN prior to election 2008

FY09 HIGHLIGHTS

Helping Americans Experience Democracy Through Voter Registration Reform and Modernization

The 2008 election showed us that high levels of interest, good organization and mobilized voters can make a difference, though the high level of participation occurred in the face of a largely antiquated patchwork-quilt of voter registration procedures. As in 2004, too many voters in the 2008 election experienced problems with the voter rolls. Many found their names were erroneously omitted and they were forced to cast a provisional ballot, or they registered only to find that the arbitrary registration deadline had passed, or perhaps they had recently relocated because of a move for school or because they were displaced in the economic meltdown and weren't permitted to vote on account of an outdated address. At Demos, we've been engaged in several multiyear campaigns to promote voter-registration specific modernization and compliance reforms to help bring millions of Americans into the democratic process:

- Since 2000, Demos has been conducting a **campaign to promote laws that would allow voters to register and vote on the same day**. Our research has shown that states with these Same Day Registration laws have consistently higher voter participation than those that do not. Through our campaign, we've helped states such as Iowa, Montana and North Carolina pass and implement this important law, and we're working with advocacy networks around the country to help states examine how best to implement this important election reform. In North Carolina, nearly 190,000 citizens were able to cast a ballot because of their new Same Day Registration law. **Laws that allow people to register and vote on the same day helped more than 1 million people cast a ballot in November, 2008**. Currently nine states allow voters to register and vote on the same day, and we are working to increase that number by the 2010 election.



In 2008, Dêmos published a guide to help states implement new laws that allow citizens to register and vote on the same day.

Since 2004, Dêmos has been engaged in the **NVRA Implementation Project**, a national effort to help states become compliant with the National Voter Registration Act's (NVRA) requirement that public assistance agencies offer voter registration opportunities. This mandate, known as "Section 7," is intended to help bring historically under-represented lower-income voters into the democratic process—one that many states have overlooked in recent years. Dêmos has been working with partners Project Vote and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights to conduct research on state performance and to help noncompliant states quickly, fully and effectively implement the law.

The 2008 election provided evidence of exactly how well this provision of the NVRA works when properly implemented: a court order in Missouri requiring implementation led to an increase to about 12,000 registrations per month from fewer than 700, on average; Virginia saw an eight-fold increase in agency-based registration; over 77,000 North Carolinians registered since early 2007 compliance efforts. We also work with our partners to, when necessary, engage in litigation to bring states into NVRA compliance, such as in Ohio, where a federal appellate court victory established that the Secretary of State and Director of Office of Jobs and Family Services are responsible for ensuring the state's compliance with the NVRA's agency registration requirements.

Working through the Courts to Reform Election Administration

Dêmos takes on ambitious litigation to achieve needed reforms in election administration. As just one example, we achieved an important appellate victory in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit last fall on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio, confirming the responsibility of state officials to ensure that voters are not disfranchised through lack of adequate resources, poll-worker errors or other systemic problems. Noted election law scholar Ned Foley termed it arguably "the most significant appellate court reliance" to date on the equal protection theory that emerged from *Bush v. Gore*.

New National Reforms to Promote Civic Engagement

In July, Dêmos joined with America Speaks and Everyday Democracy to convene a gathering of thinkers, writers and advocates to chart out a comprehensive democracy reform agenda to promote to presidential candidates. That comprehensive package includes elements of election reform, deliberative democracy and advocacy. It rests on a vision of America that encourages the maximum levels of voter turnout, practices people-centered governance, and actively seeks and genuinely values everyone's participation. It envisions an infrastructure of participation and governance that welcomes everyone, while also taking steps to ensure that the voices of the powerful are not unduly elevated. Out of the convening came several key recommendations, which we are beginning to see take root in the new administration:

1. Establish a White House Office on Civic Engagement and make an institutional commitment to greater participation.
2. Convene national discussions to provide citizens with a voice in the policy making process and build capacity for greater participation at all levels.
3. Adopt policy reforms for increasing participation in public life.

Working for...A Government By, For and of the People

By now, it is clear to Americans everywhere that we need to invest in and maintain the public systems and structures that serve our nation. These things—schools, roads and bridges, job training programs, snow removal, firefighters and the police, and on and on—need support from the public, so that government can do its vital work. We are hopeful we're witnessing a renaissance in the American spirit, recognizing what we can do together through these public investments. To make sure we can build long-term support for the many common goods that we share and rely on, we first have to recognize and address the disconnection with and disaffection for government that has persisted for decades.

Dēmos is working to help build broad-based support for structures that work for the common good by helping Americans gain a more productive and focused understanding of government, and a sense of engagement and common purpose. Through research conducted for **Public Works: the Dēmos Center for the Public Sector**, we have found that Americans have a strong distaste for partisanship and political self-interest, and that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of what government is and does. We are using this research and developing tools and trainings to help advocates, leaders and policymakers who seek citizen support for public sector solutions find ways of reaching reform goals without framing them as a set of “wins” for one party or another. Instead, we need one that contributes constructively to a new public understanding of the purpose and possibilities of government action--an approach that emphasizes problem-solving, long-term thinking, and a genuine concern for the common good.

Dēmos has developed just such an approach. Through trainings and consultations, we are helping to motivate organizations, elected officials and community leaders across the country to consciously engage in activities that will support the role of government in achieving the critical balance between the public good and private interests. We are working to revitalize in the American spirit the importance of public purposes and a conception of citizenship that calls on everyone to see themselves as stewards of our common good.

[Public Works] is totally redefining the right way to present governance.

– Molly Markert, Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved

Most importantly for the Poverty Institute, our reports and bigger publications that we work on no longer start out with technical jargon but frame the issue up front as one about the need for adequate revenues to fund public services...

– Kate Brewster, Poverty Institute/One Rhode Island

FY09 HIGHLIGHTS

On The Road, Changing The Conversation

Over the past few years, members of our Public Works team have been working across the country, traveling constantly to help leaders engage their constituencies with the idea of an effective government properly empowered and funded to work toward the common good. In the last year, at hundreds of workshops, Dēmos has helped empower thousands of state and community leaders, policy and advocacy groups, elected officials, public sector employees and others with a new, constructive message about public sector work.

Training Tools, Building on Momentum

Dēmos is helping to keep our state and community leaders apprised of ongoing techniques, news, messages and framing through a series of trainings and workshops, but also through an ongoing educational series and through personal consultations.



Patrick Bresette conducts a training at Washington State University

On the Radio Around the Web

On the first Tuesday of each month, Dēmos produces a radio show, *First Tuesdays*, in partnership with KPFT-FM in Houston, that examines the distinction between government and politics while explore the role of government in our everyday lives. The show, which is also streamed live and has developed a strong social media audience, challenges listeners to think more critically about the common structures and opportunities which we count on and share with our neighbors and which are facilitated best through the public sector.



Kym King conducting an interview for First Tuesdays.

Getting Dēmos into educational systems is critical! It really has transformed how I'm able to convey information to my students. I think about problems in a different way.

– Vicki Totten, Associate Academic Dean, St. Edwards University in Austin, Texas

Since we have taken a very community-based approach, Dēmos' model has made it easier for us to bring together groups that have traditionally been at odds over declining revenues (e.g. city workers and administrators; parents, teachers, unions and school district administrators) to work together for statewide reform.

– Joe Fahey, Institute for Wisconsin's Future

Working for...Responsible US Engagement in an Interdependent World

The United States must renew its rich tradition of global engagement to create a more democratic and prosperous world, as well as to protect our own security. More than ever, in an age of international interdependence, the U.S. must collaborate with other countries—as well as with civil society and the private sector—to address the most pressing challenges of our time, such as creating a more equitable and stable global economy, averting a climatic catastrophe as well as recurrent energy crises, reducing terrorism and the conditions that feed it, and ensuring the just treatment of the millions of migrants who cross borders in search of a better life.

Demos is developing a new generation of policy ideas to inform responsible U.S. engagement in an interdependent world. Global institutions forged in the post-World War II era must be reimagined or replaced, along with policy approaches predicated on U.S. global dominance. Fresh ways must be found to engage the American public in global policy issues to ensure that Americans not only support strong U.S. engagement in the world, but also that the public demands this engagement be guided by the core democratic values that underpin our society at home.

Through the **International Program**, the work of our **CivWorld** and **U.S. in the World** programs, and frequent partnerships with the **World Policy Institute**, Demos is focusing its initial work in several areas: trade and globalization, citizenship and immigration, public opinion and foreign policy, and an exploration of the interplay between democratic theory and international interdependence. Additional research and policy development on areas such as energy and the environment will be explored throughout 2009-10.



FY09 HIGHLIGHTS:

Interdependence Day

In September 2008 in Brussels, Demos' CivWorld Program convened the Sixth **Interdependence Day** Celebration, an annual event started in 2002 to begin a dialogue about the realities of a modern world in which interconnection to key factors in our lives—economies, energy policy, religion, culture, environmental concerns, terrorism—rather than mutual isolation, are defining characteristics. We are doing so with the belief that while our problems and opportunities are global, they must be also solved through civic engagement that is local. This year's event took place from September 9-13, and welcomed more than 100 speaking panelists and arts participants from over **25 countries** (including Libya, India, Morocco, Poland, Hungary, Georgia and Turkey), and included a Youth Summit that brought together young adults from around the world to discuss issues of culture and identity, religion and conflict prevention, as well as a session moderated by Dr. Cornel West on the relationship of U.S. to the World.



2008 Interdependence Day
Celebration in Brussels

Trading Up

Demos believes that the United States should play a bold new leadership role in creating a global economy that works for everyone. It should encourage faster economic growth, higher labor standards, and stronger social protections in developing nations while buffering Americans from the downsides of globalization and equipping U.S. workers to succeed in the global economy. To achieve these goals, we believe that the President and Congress should embrace a policy agenda that balances a commitment to markets and open trade with dramatic efforts to reduce inequities and insecurities in developed and developing nations alike. This agenda would seek to maximize what is best about the global economy: its enormous capacity to generate wealth and potential to generate economic opportunity from that wealth; and minimize what is worst: competition among nations to lower labor standards and reduce social protections to attract jobs and capital. In 2008, we published two priming publications to lay the groundwork for achieving these goals:

- *Trading Up: Win-Win Solutions to Raise Global Living Standards and Ensure the Success of American Workers*, from Dēmos and the World Policy Institute
- *Talking about Trade and Economic Globalization: A Message Builder*, from Dēmos and the U.S. in the World Initiative



World Policy Institute / Dēmos Event Collaboration

Scholar Alan Wolfe discusses his book *The Future of Liberalism* at a lunch event moderated by Dēmos Senior Fellow David Callahan and co-sponsored by the World Policy Institute.

Dēmos has become a leading venue for public discussion in New York City and features noted authors, policymakers and advocates.



Working for...New Ideas & Voices Into the Public Debate

New and diverse perspectives can help push out the boundaries of our public and policy debate. We've seen the primacy of conservative ideology over the last 30 years—using media, publishing and a network of powerful think-tanks to build a framework for political and public thought with a “drown government in a bathtub” mentality aimed at shrinking the public sector, starving our social insurance programs, and instilling a go-it-alone concept of citizenship.

Dēmos is proud to be part of a progressive movement that is reshaping the way new ideas inform the public and policy debates, operating on a basis of shared responsibility and shared progress. We are working to incubate and execute new and diverse solutions to shared problems, and to offer long-range goals that can create stability and prosperity for Americans and people around the world. Through the work of the **Fellows Program**, Dēmos supports scholars and writers whose innovative work influences the public debate about crucial national and global issues. The program offers an intellectual home and public engagement platform for more than 20 fellows from diverse backgrounds: emerging public intellectuals, journalists, distinguished public figures, and academics whose research can be used to inform the policy world.



Distinguished Senior Fellow Linda Tarr-Whelan taking questions at a Women's Leadership Initiative Forum.

FY09 HIGHLIGHTS

In the Debate

- Distinguished Senior Fellow Robert Kuttner has become a leading analyst on the Obama Administration's economic policy challenges, drawing on his *New York Times* bestseller, *Obama's Challenge: America's Economic Crisis and the Power of a Transformative Presidency*.
- Distinguished Senior Fellow Teresa Ghilarducci was named to the *New York Times* “Best Ideas” list in 2008 for her proposal to create a supplementary public pension system.
- Senior Fellow Lew Daly spoke and interviewed across the country on wealth and inequality in the knowledge economy, based on his new book *Unjust Deserts: How the Rich are Taking Our Common Inheritance and Why We Should Take it Back* (co-authored with Gar Alperovitz).
- Senior Fellow Nomi Prins provided up-to-the-minute commentary on the financial bailout of 2008-2009 in *Mother Jones*, *CNN Money*, *The Nation* and other publications.

The Women's Leadership Initiative

Despite enormous progress over the past several decades in this country, as well as the historic nomination of a woman presidential and vice-presidential candidate in the 2008 election, the facts are clear: **American women are the majority of voters, 80 percent of consumers, the majority of graduates of colleges, professional and graduate programs, and the driving force of entrepreneurship.**

And yet the wage gap persists, only a handful of women are on corporate boards or in corner offices—no matter the field or profession, women business owners still face unnecessary obstacles, Congress is only 16 percent women, and quality affordable and accessible childcare—which mostly affects mothers—is still only a dream for most. A deeper conversation must enter the public debate about women's extremely poor numbers in top leadership positions compared to other parts of the world—whether access to the top is still not readily available to women, and what realities exist that force women to choose not to lead or constrain their options as leaders.

In 2008, Dēmos launched the **Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI)**, a multi-year project led by Distinguished Senior Fellow Linda Tarr-Whelan, who is the former US Ambassador to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, to provide a platform for this conversation and a vehicle for entrance into the public debate. The WLI is creating the space for this dialogue through public events, a media campaign and the publication of a new book by Tarr-Whelan entitled *Women Lead the Way: Your Guide to Stepping Up to Leadership and Changing The World*.

Emerging Voices Project

Generational change in our society has emerged as an important factor in social activism and electoral politics in recent years, as young people's engagement has grown in both numbers and influence. At the same time, strategists for social change are increasingly focused on the need for new institutions and programs dedicated to promoting progressive ideas, arguments and values in the public square. The two trends have converged in some ways but not in others. Most notably, the generational and political makeup of our public intellectual life has not changed in a way that is comparable to the growth of young people's leadership in issue advocacy and grassroots campaigning.

It is imperative that we help young progressives gain a foothold in the public debate. Translating this powerful generational change into an agenda-setting power in our politics requires not just numbers and energy on the ground, but also articulate, well-defined voices in the media and the larger world of ideas. Through the **Emerging Voices Project**, Dēmos is investing in a new generation of progressive thought-leaders, and doing so with a high priority on young thinkers and writers of color, because without more diversity in our public debates the complex challenges we face will be much more difficult to address and resolve.

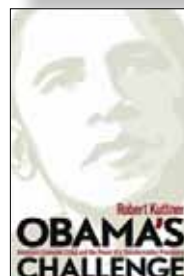
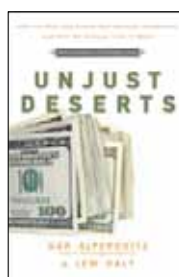
Dēmos Forums and Special Events

Rarely has the need for creative public engagement on critical issues been more urgent. When we talk about the goals of Dēmos and our collective objectives for the nation and the world, we cannot simply talk about policies. We must also better articulate our "first principles," as well as expand the menu of big ideas that advance these principles. Dēmos is deeply committed to long-term ideas work, in particular through participation in public events.

Through special events, conferences and our Dēmos Forum: Ideas for Change series, Dēmos has become a leading convener and host of discussions on some of the most critical issues facing our society. Since they began in 2002, we have held nearly 300 Dēmos Forums, which are special two-hour events usually taking place in our New York City office or in Washington, D.C. A number of America's leading authors and public intellectuals have spoken at Dēmos, including Barbara Ehrenreich, Thomas Frank, Bob Herbert, Derrick Bell, Julianne Malveaux, Bill Moyers, Kevin Phillips, Theda Skocpol, Elizabeth Warren, Benjamin Barber, Jim Wallis and Paul Krugman. In 2008, with a general election approaching, Dēmos events addressed issues central to the public debate, focussing on the financial crisis, the household economy, government, international affairs and the workings of American Democracy. Many of these topics were discussed in-depth in our special Dēmos Forum series on Race and Policy and Labor, and in special events on Women's Leadership and Regulation.

Dēmos Books Project

Over the last several years, we have substantially expanded our ability to support the work of new authors and help shape the public and policy debates through the **Dēmos Books Project**. This is a platform for the work of fellows, staff and affiliates who are engaging public debate by publishing new books addressing the critical issues of our times. Some of the 2008 books include:



Core Programs and Projects

The **Democracy Program** works to strengthen democracy in the United States by reducing barriers to voter participation and encouraging civic engagement. Dēmos supports expanded democratic participation by conducting new research; supporting pro-voter litigation; providing information and resources to advocates and policymakers; and advancing a broad agenda for election reform.

The **Economic Opportunity Program** addresses the severe economic insecurity and inequality that characterize American society today. The program offers fresh analysis and bold policy ideas to provide new opportunities for young adults and financially-strapped families to achieve economic security.

Public Works: The Dēmos Center for the Public Sector helps advocates, policymakers and community leaders across the United States re-envision the role of government. Dēmos believes in a public sector that acts effectively for the common good and plans for our future, with the public support and resources necessary to succeed in that critical work.

In partnership with **CivWorld** and **U.S. in the World**, the **International Program** advances the ideals of strong democracy, shared prosperity and effective governance at the global level. This work challenges current patterns of globalization with the goals of democratizing global governance; ensuring that all people benefit from free markets and trade; and enabling immigrants to have a greater voice in the societies in which they live. The program also develops new messages to help build public support for responsible U.S. global engagement.

The **Fellows Program** supports scholars and writers whose innovative work influences the public debate about crucial national and global issues. The program offers an intellectual home and platform for more than 20 fellows from diverse backgrounds: emerging public intellectuals, journalists, distinguished public figures and academics whose research can be used to inform the policy world.

The **Dēmos Books Project** supports the work of fellows, staff and affiliates who are engaging public debate by publishing new books addressing the critical issues of our times.

Dēmos Events and Conferences feature prominent authors, scholars and advocates addressing key national and global issues.

Affiliated Partners

The **Building Movement Project** helps non-profit organizations integrate social justice principles into their work; strengthen their role as centers of democratic practice; and plan for the next generation of leadership.



Business for Shared Prosperity is a network of business owners, executives and investors committed to sustainable public policies and business practices that broaden economic opportunity, expand wealth ownership, and reduce inequality.



Inequality.org is a resource center for journalists, legislators, advocates and citizens concerned about America's growing economic divide. Building on the work of Dēmos' 2004 conference and 2006 book, *Inequality Matters*, Inequality.org's tools outline the magnitude, causes and far-reaching consequences of this decades-long trend.



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Demos would like to acknowledge the vital work of our recent interns:

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Jennifer Murray • Mike Schwartz
Rebecca Segal • Rob Watson
Sara Lopez • Venessa Miemis
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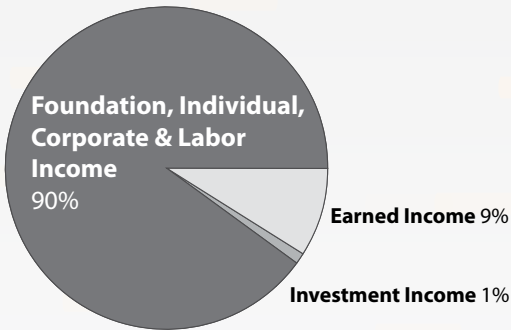
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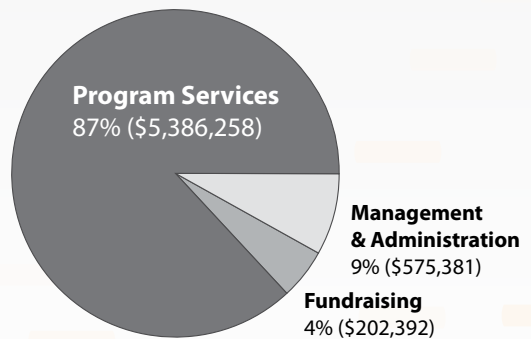
FINANCIALS FY09

Graph 1: Total Revenue (\$6.16 million)

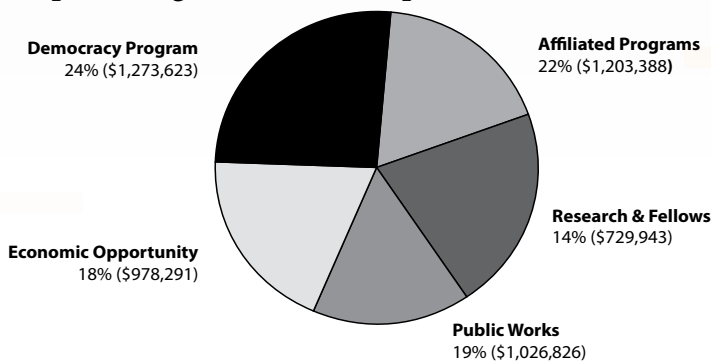


**Total End of Fiscal
Year Net Assets
\$3,864,811**

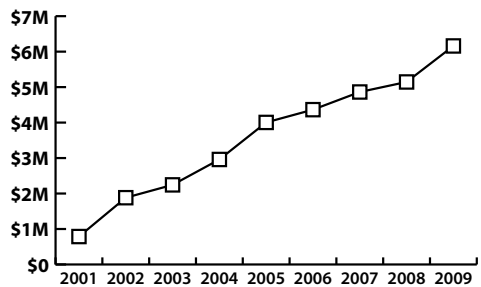
Graph 2: Total Expenses (\$6.16 million)



Graph 3: Program Services Expenses



Graph 4: Budget Growth



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