

# Making the Public Case for Asset Building

The 2010  
State & Local Asset Policy Coalition Preconference

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# Introductions

Kay Hixson (moderator)

- Communications Director at CFED

Phyllis Jordan

- Vice President at The Hatcher Group

Senator Tim Keller

- State Senator of New Mexico



# Our Agenda - Framing and messaging

Framing and delivering your messages (Kay Hixson)

Pitching to a journalist (Phyllis Jordan)

Pitching to an elected official (Senator Tim Keller)

Question & Answer

Demonstration: The good and the bad

Your turn on stage



## Today's economy: A game changer for advocates

- Federal/state/local budgets are slashed.
- New programs and/or expansions are non-starters.
- Many IDAs, CSAs and other asset-building programs are facing the budget ax.
- Layoffs and evictions are rampant.

Just last week, the US Census Bureau confirmed what you already knew. Poverty is getting worse in America.



# What do we do when “giving up” or “business as usual” are not options?

1.

- Adjust our strategy to reflect a new “frame” for asset building

2.

- Frame and deliver our message in a compelling way

3.

- Communicate based on understanding your audiences;



# DEMOS Research

The Public Works Research Project at DEMOS found that Americans...

- Lack a basic understanding of how the economy works.
- Feel that the only influence that individuals have is as “individual actors.”
- Have extremely limited and problematic notions of the role government should play in shaping the economy; government is a last resort ... protect the deserving and police the bad actors.
- Have little sense of their own power to influence economic policy.
- Haven’t adopted the idea of “responsible citizens”.



## More DEMOS Research

How advocates *can* build support for economic policies that serve ALL Americans.

- **Tell a NEW story.**
- Explain how things work
- Uncover the public policies and public structures that create a particular kind of economy.
- Talk about intentional policies and interdependence;
- Give the public a sense of how public policy decisions shape the economy to meet our **common** goals.



## DEMOS: Road map for “framing” asset building

### Public beliefs that work for us.

- A thriving middle-class is intentional and connected to our broader national prosperity
- Hard work should be valued/rewarded
- Working people are struggling
- Asset building has always required both **INDIVIDUAL EFFORT** and specific **GOVERNMENT POLICIES** to create widely-shared economic opportunity and prosperity.



# Demos: Effective communications combines two ideas.

## The intentional middle class

- A strong middle class is the engine driving our economy and is the result of deliberate and proactive policy choices.

## Public structures are the foundation of the economy

- Government structures are the foundation of prosperity and economic stability, and to a strong middle class.

## The government is intentionally involved

- Public structures show **government is intentionally involved** in that supports our economy.

## Mobility

- Airports, highways.

## Connections

- Communications grids, postal system.

## Basic necessities

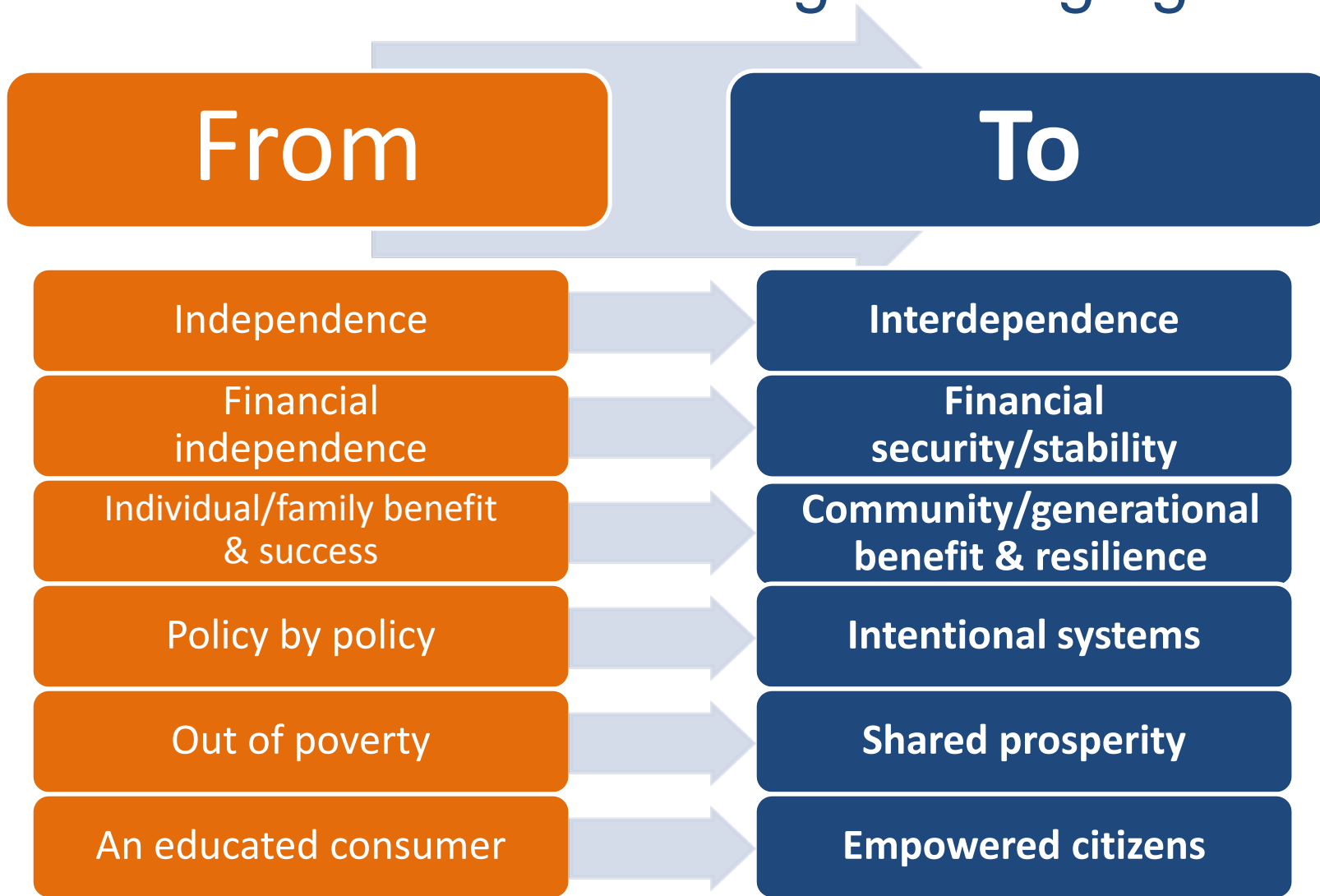
- Water systems, power grids.

## Education

- Public schools, community colleges.



# Demos: new asset building messaging



# Don't trigger problematic perceptions

Low-income families

Out of poverty

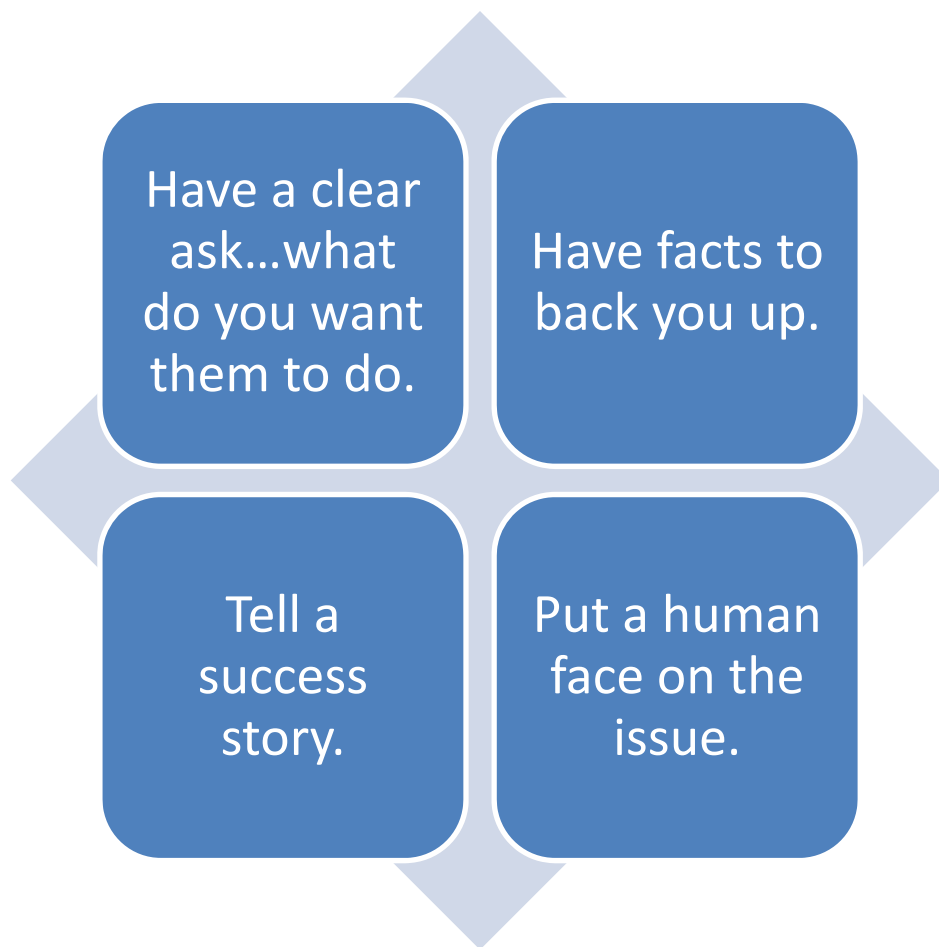
Anti-poverty strategy

Moving toward self-sufficiency

Change in the lives of program participants



# Basics of a good pitch



Next up...

**Pitching to a journalist**

**Phyllis Jordan**

Vice president, The Hatcher Group

**Pitching an elected official**

**Tim Keller**

State Senator (D-NM)

