

# No Status Quo

ADVOCATE WITH  
EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY SERVICES



Episcopal  
Community  
Services

## Great success comes when people are empowered to take action.

To challenge and reduce intergenerational poverty, Episcopal Community Services first works with people and families to help them map their trajectories toward upward economic mobility.

But systems and policies build walls, often intentionally, barricading the path to self-sufficiency. To remove these barriers, we advocate for change at the city, state, and national levels, promoting social policies and practices to disrupt the stubborn cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Episcopal Community Services is committed to creating meaningful change—and working toward a more just world is a responsibility we all share. Join this movement.

**Learn more and participate in our advocacy efforts, please visit [ecsphilly.org/advocacy](https://ecsphilly.org/advocacy).**

“Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”

**DR. CORNEL WEST**



## CREATING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

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# 34%

34% of Philadelphia's children live below the poverty line.

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We can't expect change if we keep doing the same things. Together, we can confront and change systems and policies that deprive our participants and their communities of choice and opportunity, with emphasis on the three lead advocacy issues that follow.

## LEAD ISSUES

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### RACIAL EQUITY

The playing field is not level. We look to inform and influence policies and educate on the issues—which have at their core a history of racism—that impact the families and communities we serve. We are committed to working for fundamental change in all our systems that practice racism—both conscious and unconscious.

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### LIVABLE WAGE

Everybody deserves a livable wage. The average minimum wage worker in the U.S. would need to work nearly 97 hours per week to afford the average two-bedroom home. And housing is just one basic human need. We urge policymakers to make fair changes so working families can thrive, not just survive, because the minimum isn't enough.

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### BENEFITS CLIFF

Policy shouldn't punish promotion. The Benefits Cliff is a dynamic that occurs when a slight increase in a worker's income results in the sudden loss of public benefits—worth much more than the income increase itself. We advocate for public policy solutions that can help families as they make upward financial progress.

Source: [reports.nlihc.org/oor](https://reports.nlihc.org/oor)



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### ARE YOU IN?

## We need to do more.

In 2016, ECS made a bold commitment to advocate for public policies that support those we serve instead of crippling them.

The agency has always delivered supportive services for people and families in need—now with a brighter guiding star leading ECS to challenge and reduce intergenerational poverty, leadership, staff, and supporters alike agree: We need to do more.

“Program participants, regardless of the immediate support they come to ECS for—housing, education, workforce training—are affected by unjust, outdated, and predatory systems that make it harder to secure stability,” said Victoria Bennett, chief inclusion and advocacy officer.

Lawmakers have heard from a mighty community of people who advocate with us. Nearly 1,000 calls to action were delivered urging change for issues including: raising the minimum wage, fighting for benefits that help people living with disabilities, securing stimulus checks during the pandemic, and holding higher standards in policing after the murder of George Floyd.

By concentrating on the effects of our three lead issues, we can make progress and then chip away at other broken policies. In addition, we join forces with partners organizing around issues that harm the communities we serve and align with our values, such as gun violence and SNAP benefits.

We listen by closely monitoring what is happening federally, in Harrisburg, and here in Philadelphia—and we react. We also listen to the people in our programs who know first-hand how systems affect their livelihoods.

Just as Executive Director David Griffith often says: Most of our participants can tell us what they need. “In business with customers, you're trained to find the pain and fix it. You don't find the pain if you don't listen. The same needs to be done when it comes to social policy and practice.”

For real change, we cannot keep doing things the same way. We must choose action, not sit idle when there is so much to do and undo.

We need to do more. Will you answer the call?

**Tear this sheet off as a reminder to exercise your empathy.** ▶



# Maintain justice and do what is right.

ISAIAH 56:1



**Episcopal  
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**Look Up.  
Challenge  
Poverty.**