



Wes Clark's Agenda for Cities

Our cities and towns are the center of opportunity. They are the foundation of the most important force of our nation's economy: America's large middle class. The majority of our children learns and grows in their neighborhoods. Our local governments are the first responders to the obstacles that prevent people from reaching their goals—they are on the front lines, addressing issues challenging families like education, safety and opportunity. That's why local priorities should be our national priorities. We must make choices with public funds that help cities flourish. Yet, because of state and federal fiscal crises, many cities and towns are forced to cut services and raise taxes – under-funded public schools, deteriorating infrastructure, and increasing crime rates are a result. Cities and towns are up to the challenge of providing opportunity, but they need smart investments from the federal government to help. The good news is we know what works. We just need presidential leadership to do it. Wes Clark is proposing a plan that will help cities and towns achieve the following goals:

- *Strengthen Economic Opportunity*
- *Meet Our Housing Challenges*
- *Prevent Crime*
- *Support Smart Growth and Clean Cities*
- *Invest in Education*
- *Provide Affordable Health Care*

Strengthen Economic Opportunity

- **Provide immediate help for local governments facing fiscal crises:** Strong and fiscally stable local governments are crucial to create economic opportunity. Wes Clark proposes to create a State and Local Tax Rebate Fund of \$40 billion over two years to create jobs and lessen the need for states and local governments to raise taxes and other fees, and cut critical expenditures and investments in infrastructure.
- **Invest in job creation:** Job creation is Wes Clark's top economic priority. Under President Bush, three million private-sector jobs have been lost- the worst job losses under any president since Herbert Hoover. Instead of addressing the problem, President Bush has pursued the only policy he believes in-- tax breaks for the wealthiest. Meanwhile working families worry about job security and the unemployed struggle to find work. Wes Clark has a real plan to let America get back to work in our cities and towns. His three-part strategy devotes \$100 billion over two years to jumpstart job creation without increasing the deficit, by investing in local infrastructure and security and providing job creation tax credits.
- **Protect Manufacturing and High Tech Jobs:** The American economy has lost 2.6 million manufacturing jobs since January 2001. In every month since President Bush took office, the economy has lost manufacturing jobs. Wes Clark's plan would jumpstart the manufacturing sector and get jobs growing today by ending rewards for companies that move jobs overseas, rewarding companies that produce products in the U.S. and investing in training and research and development.



Meet Our Nation's Housing Challenges

- **Expand the Low Income Housing Tax Credit:** Decent and affordable housing is integral to healthy regional economies, family stability and child development. Wes Clark will expand the per person allocation to increase investment in construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing.
- **Increase and Move toward Fully Funding Section 8 Vouchers:** Section 8 vouchers successfully help elderly, disabled and low-income working households pay for housing. However, the Bush Administration has decreased the number of Section 8 vouchers, despite the 1999 gap of 1.8 million units between the available rental supply affordable to the poorest households and the demand for them. Wes Clark strongly opposes block granting this program to states.
- **Fully Fund HOPE VI:** The HOPE VI program finances the rehabilitation of severely distressed public housing, tearing down unsafe projects and replacing them with homes. It is an important part of the revitalization of our neighborhoods. But the Bush Administration proposed cutting the HOPE VI program entirely in the FY2004 budget. Wes Clark would protect and fund the HOPE VI program.
- **Support Successful Strategies to Solve Homelessness.** The Continuum of Care approach understands that homelessness is not caused simply by the lack of shelter but involves a variety of underlying, unmet physical, economic and social needs. Solving homelessness is more than just helping people off the street; it's also about providing access to education, training, job placement and, in many cases, quality mental health services. Wes Clark believes that successful local strategies to combat homelessness and provide transitional housing deserve the federal government's strong support.

Prevent Crime

- **Investing in Local Law Enforcement:** Meeting the costs of public safety poses one of the most serious problems for cities facing tight budgets. Our local police departments are increasingly engaged in a two-front war on terrorism and crime, but many police departments are losing emergency and law enforcement personnel faster than they can replace them. The cop crunch facing many cities and towns demands support from the federal government. Instead, the Bush administration has cut funding for new police officers and crime rates have increased. Wes Clark will invest in hiring new police officers and supporting community policing strategies through supporting the Community Oriented Policing Program (COPS) and investing in Local Law Enforcement block grants. In addition to preserving community policing, Wes Clark supports investments in new technology, better equipment and community initiatives-- re-launching the COPS program in a way that meets the realities of the post-September 11 world.
- **Supporting First Responders:** Our firemen and emergency personnel are on the front lines here at home—we need to make sure they are prepared by ensuring that they have the training, equipment, protective gear and staffing to make sure they can respond effectively and protect the public. President Bush has failed to deliver the funds he promised to support training, overtime, and crucial safety equipment. To make sure that first responders are prepared to meet our emergencies, Wes Clark is proposing an immediate \$40 billion investment in Homeland Security to accelerate training and equipping of our emergency personnel.



Support Smart Growth and Clean Cities

- **Support Comprehensive Community Development:** Reinvesting in central cities and inner suburbs is the first step in stemming sprawl. Wes Clark supports assisting state and local leaders to build stronger communities by effectively coordinating affordable housing with transportation, economic development, employment, childcare, and educational activities to build stronger communities.
- **Expand the New Markets Tax Credit:** To increase investment in low-income communities Wes Clark will expand the successful New Markets Tax Credit so that more credits will be available for investments in eligible businesses.
- **Collect and Disseminate Market Data on Central Cities:** To encourage investment in urban communities, Wes Clark would collect and aggregate the information about cities and their residents available from federal agencies so that businesses can use the information in making strategic decisions. Public or private information available to potential businesses or investors in many central cities is inadequate and too costly to obtain for any given business. The federal government, on an interagency basis, should improve its collection and dissemination of useful market data on central cities and make it widely available to local governments and businesses.
- **Invest in Public Transportation:** Public transit can reduce congestion, pollution, and preserve open spaces. Public transit is absolutely critical for many of the people who need work most, but in many cities, low-income communities are under-served. Incentives to improve public transit systems not only help make the roadways more secure and help preserve the environment, but also ensure that all Americans have a greater opportunity to contribute to a growing economy.
- **Clean up Cities and Towns:** The Bush Administration's record on environmental protection and enforcement is abysmal. Wes Clark will promote better enforcement for everyone and re-invigorate action on environmental justice at the EPA. He will provide adequate funding for safely developing "brownfields" sites, and ensure that those sites are developed in a manner that respects the nature of the communities where they are located.

Invest in Education

- **Make Sure Children Start School Ready to Learn:** We can improve student achievement by making sure that students don't start school unprepared. Wes Clark will offer universal preschool access for all four-year-olds and a growing number of three-year-olds, whose families want it; improve preschool standards; and expand Head Start.
- **Fund Schools:** Wes Clark supports relieving the stress that unfunded mandates place on school systems by funding them so that children aren't left behind in schools crippled by lack of resources. We must also invest in hiring, training, and retaining new teachers – instead of cutting the funding, as the Bush administration has done, for the resources they need to teach our children. And we need to invest in school construction and renovation so that teachers and students have safe, modern facilities in which to work and learn.



- **Expanding Continuing Education and Job Training:** Wes Clark is calling for a \$20 billion investment in state and local governments to keep tuition increases down at public colleges and to help state and local governments train (and retrain) workers for new jobs and better opportunities.

Provide Affordable Health Care

- **Guarantee that Every Child Has Health Insurance:** Wes Clark would provide health insurance to every child through age 22. A new, progressive tax credit that families could use for health insurance would begin where public program eligibility ends and extend it to 500 percent of the poverty limit.
- **Affordable Health Care for Everyone:** Wes Clark's plan would allow Americans without access to job-based health insurance to purchase coverage through the same system that insures members of Congress. The government would ensure that the premiums paid by individuals are fairly priced and available to all eligible people. In addition, his plan would fully fund state-based programs to extend full coverage to adults with income below 150 percent of the poverty level and help workers between jobs with health insurance.