

D R A F T Agenda
Child Poverty and Prevention Council Meeting

Friday, September 17, 2010
2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Legislative Office Building, Room 2B
Hartford, Connecticut

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| I. | Welcome and Introductions
<i>Brenda Sisco, Chair</i> | 2:30 p.m. |
| II. | Review Minutes of the June 17 Meeting
<i>Brenda Sisco, Chair</i> | 2:40 p.m. |
| III. | Discuss Agency Prevention Report
<i>Anne Foley, OPM</i> | 2:45 p.m. |
| IV. | Review Proposed Modifications to Priority Recommendations
<i>Anne Foley, OPM</i> | 2:55 p.m. |
| V. | Next Steps
<i>Brenda Sisco, Chair</i> | 3:20 p.m. |
| VI. | Adjournment | 3:30 p.m. |
- a. Next Meeting – Tuesday, October 19 at 1:30 p.m.

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Meeting Summary

Child Poverty and Prevention Council
Thursday, June 17, 2010

Members Present: Brenda Sisco (Chair), Paul Flinter for George Coleman (SDE), Lindy Lee Gold (DECD), Heidi McIntosh, Rudy Brooks for Susan Hamilton (DCF), Dennis King (DOT), Michelle Hayward (DOC), Mary Mushinsky (State Representative), Mark Polzella (DOL), Peter O’Meara (DDS), Michelle Dumas Keuler for Robert Brothers (CHRO), Jeanne Milstein for Faith VosWinkel (OCA), Pamela Giannini for Claudette Beaulieu (DSS), and Elaine Zimmerman (COC).

Members Absent: Norma Gyle (DPH), Senator MaryAnn Handley (Senate Democrats), Representative Lile Gibbons (House Republicans), Gregg Cogswell (Senate Republicans), Christine Keller (Judicial), Laura Amenta (CTF), and Michael Meotti (DHE).

Others Participants: Anne Foley (OPM), and John Frassinell (DPH).

Agenda Item	Action Taken
Welcome and Introductions	The meeting was convened at 2:10 p.m. Acting Secretary Brenda Sisco introduced herself as the new Chair of the Council. Council members introduced themselves.
Approve Minutes of the January Meeting	Lindy Gold moved approval of the January 2010 meeting minutes and Dennis King seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote. Mary Mushinsky abstained and informed the Council that she was chairing another committee meeting and was unable to attend the January meeting.
2010 Legislation Impacting Child Poverty or Prevention	Anne Foley highlighted 2010 legislation impacting child poverty and prevention. The discussion focused on P.A. 10-133 An Act Concerning Children in the Recession. The bill creates new responsibilities for state agencies and the Child Poverty and Prevention Council. The Council is designated as the children in recession leadership team to make recommendations for the state’s emergency response to children in the recession. The bill also requires that the Council

	<p>meet quarterly if the unemployment rate in Connecticut is 8% or greater for a three month period. Connecticut's current unemployment rate is 9% and as a result the Council will meet quarterly.</p> <p>It was agreed that council staff would contact council members over the summer to: (a) assess the task force recommendations; (b) identify what is currently being done to implement them; and (c) whether and how they should be incorporated into the council's priority recommendations.</p>
<p>Priority Recommendations</p>	<p><i>Increase Enrollment in the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)</i></p> <p>Pam Giannini from DSS presented information on CEAP which receives its funding from the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The program serves households with income up to 60% of the state median income and provides a basic benefit of \$580 to \$880 per household to subsidize their winter heating expenses. The state contracts with the 12 community action agencies to operate CEAP and there are approximately 120 intake sites including town halls and senior centers. In FY10 the program helped 113,300 households meet their heating costs, of which, 23% or 26,213 had children under the age of 6.</p> <p><i>Increase Enrollment in WIC</i></p> <p>John Frassinelli from DPH presented information on Connecticut's Women Infants and Children Program. The program experienced close to a 7% increase in service level from FY08 to FY09 (56,000 to 60,000 monthly). Council members identified opportunities to increase enrollment by enhancing coordination in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Education (SDE) could collaborate with the WIC Program to conduct outreach to Young Parent, Teen

	<p>Moms and Adult Education programs to increase awareness and participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WIC program could work with the Nurturing Families Network located in local hospitals to ensure that eligible at-risk families receive services. • DSS and WIC could collaborate to increase outreach efforts between DSS programs and WIC programs/services. • Increase outreach for child nutrition programs such as school breakfast, summer feeding and after-school snacks. • Provide cross state agency training to increase awareness of services provided by other state agencies. <p>At its September meeting the Council will develop specific action steps to increase enrollment in these two federal programs.</p>
Supplemental Poverty Measure	<p>Anne Foley updated the Council on the federal government's progress in developing a supplemental poverty measure. Mary Mushinsky moved to submit the Urban Institute's Economic Modeling Report to the U.S. Census Bureau and the motion was seconded by Dennis King. The motion was approved on a voice vote.</p>
Other Business	<p>Elaine Zimmerman discussed a new federal program that would extend loans to help unemployed homeowners avoid foreclosure. The Council agreed to send a letter of support for the provision to Senator Dodd as a member of the conference committee that is drafting the legislation. The letter will be distributed to Council members.</p>
Update of State Fiscal Situation	<p>Secretary Sisco stated that, although the state budget closed out FY 10 with a surplus, the FY11 budget relies on borrowing to meet our</p>

	obligations and there is a significant deficit projected for FY12 and beyond. She recommended that the Council remain mindful of this deficit and focus on recommendations that require no expenditure or those that will represent savings to the state.
Next Meeting	The next Council meeting will be held on September 21, at 2:00 p.m.

FAMILY INCOME AND EARNINGS POTENTIAL:

1. FEDERAL EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT (EITC): Increase usage of federal EITC with a target group of working poor families.
2. HOMELESSNESS: [Expand homeless diversion programs for working poor families, including expanding transitional housing to] keep children out of homeless shelters.

Council Priority Recommendation

Increase Enrollment in Subsidized Housing

- a) Increase Homelessness Prevention Programs through [C]ontinued development of the DSS-funded Counselors in Shelters and Beyond Shelter CT program [to provide a continued framework for homelessness prevention and shelter diversion] once stimulus funds are exhausted.
- b) Create more safe and affordable housing in communities across Connecticut by r[R]e-activat[e]ing the Connecticut Housing Trust Fund as a source of gap financing for the development of affordable housing.
- c) Prioritize family housing that blends families with special needs with families that do not have such special needs.
- d) Utilize the Low Income Housing Credit (LIHTC) program to provide incentives to developers to (1) develop affordable housing for families, and (2) affordable housing for families with a supportive housing component.
- e) Create incentives (or expand incentives in place) to more effectively link service resources with housing.
- f) Preserve the remaining housing available to low-income families by a[A]ligning neighborhood-based social and educational investments from all state agencies to promote housing stability and foster the growth of financial and social capital for low income households.
- g) Secure full implementation of the federal McKinney-Vento Act to ensure homeless children and youth receive education.

EDUCATION:

3. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: [Review and support the Early Childhood Cabinet proposals targeting children aged birth to five.]

Council Priority Recommendation

Guarantee Child Care Subsidies

- a) Enable low-income parents with earnings up to 75% of the state median income level and with children under the age of 13 (or under 19 if they have special needs) to continue working or secure new employment through enrollment in Care4Kids within available appropriations. If the program must be closed, provide 30 days' notice to parent and providers.
- b) Support families transitioning from public cash assistance to work with public child care programs including Care4Kids, Head Start, state-supported centers, and school readiness programs within available appropriations.
- c) Pilot and explore how to provide and fund child care in homeless shelters with the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
- d) DSS should partner with SDE in the administration of the state's school readiness program to enroll preschool children living in families with earnings less than 75% of the state median income level
- e) DSS should work with DOL and the Jobs First Employment Services program to enhance opportunities for parents through job opportunities training, transportation, and child care
- f) DSS should establish linkages with employment and training organizations and businesses to provide necessary supports for their employees seeking child care assistance.

4. YOUTH DROPOUT PREVENTION: Enhance efforts to reduce the number of students who drop out of high school.

- a) Create more opportunities in service and after-school programs to keep youth safe and engaged
- b) Give youth more opportunities in civic leadership

5. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: Expand access to our state colleges for late teens and young adults, particularly our community colleges, and expand programs intended to encourage high school students to pursue a college education.

Council Priority Recommendation

Increase Attainment of Associates Degrees

- a) Assure that collaboration of K-12 and higher education communities takes place in all regions of the state to address the challenges and opportunities of college readiness.
- b) Expand the role of full-time faculty in advising at each community college
- c) Expand the national "Achieving the Dream" model at community colleges to close gaps in student achievement
- d) Expand financial aid strategies to cover cost of living expenses
- e) Establish an incentive fund for transfer scholarships
- f) Expand dual enrollment initiatives to enable high school students to enroll without cost in college-level courses at community college.

6. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT: Enhance the existing GED program for working poor families receiving Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) and literacy and examine how youths who drop out of high school can obtain a GED.

- a) Support programs that help low-income adults get and hold jobs
- b) The state should avail itself of the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund
- c) Continue to build youth employment
- d) Expand summer youth work opportunities, using TANF emergency funds

INCOME SAFETY NET:

7. SUPPORT FOR YOUNG MOTHERS ON TFA: Make case management services available to some young mothers on TFA so that they and their children would have access to family support services, particularly during the twelve months after having a child.
8. ABRUPT TERMINATION OF BENEFITS: Examine how to soften the "cliffs" of welfare benefits.

9. ENHANCE ACCESS TO FEDERAL PROGRAMS: Increase access to available public benefits for food stamps and other similar federally-funded programs for working poor families.

Council Priority Recommendation

Increase Enrollment in Energy and Nutrition Assistance

- a) Streamline the application process for federal nutrition programs in compliance with federal rules and regulations
- b) Create more access to DSS regional offices
- c) Increase the efficiency of DSS in processing applications and providing services for SNAP
- d) Enhance outreach for SNAP and child nutrition programs such as school meals, summer feeding, after school snack, and WIC.
- e) Maximize co-enrollment in WIC and Medicaid for all eligible women
- f) Expand tobacco cessation programs targeted at pregnant women
- g) Promote use of a model of prenatal care which includes health care assessment, education, and support.
- h) DSS should provide to all of its recipient households energy assistance notifications, informing them of the availability of LIHEAP benefits and where to apply.
- i) DSS should work with providers of municipal, charitable or private energy resources which may be available to low income households to establish a coordinated response to alleviate potential crises due to a low-income household's inability to pay for heat.

FAMILY STRUCTURE AND SUPPORT:

10. REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY: Intensify efforts to reduce teen pregnancy.
11. CASE MANAGEMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT RELATED SERVICES: Provide case management services to overcome barriers to employment.
12. FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE: Support the fatherhood initiative for working poor families.

PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS:

13. IMPROVE POVERTY MEASURE: Conduct a review of alternative measures of poverty using an Economic Modeling consultant and monitor how the federal government and other states address this issue.

14. CHARTER OAK GROUP'S RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE. Coordinate with the RBA initiative.

15. COORDINATION AND SYSTEMS:

- a. Educate service employees to be aware of various services across agency lines,
- b. Utilize technology to make it easier for people to determine whether they're eligible for programs;
- c. Create a master contract or coordinated leadership team across agencies and branches of government.