



State of Connecticut  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



## **New Connecticut Law Will Maximize Federal Funds to Reduce Child Poverty**

July 15, 2008 – Connecticut, the first state in the nation to enact a law setting a target for reducing child poverty, has also become the first to mandate the use of federal food-stamp employment and training matching funds to achieve the goal.

The law, Public Act 08-161, directs that matching funds received under the federal Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program be put into programs that help the state meet its goal of reducing the number of children living in poverty by 50 percent by the year 2014. Both chambers of the Connecticut General Assembly approved the bill unanimously on May 7, and Governor M. Jodi Rell signed it into law on June 12.

Federal law permits states to earn an uncapped dollar-for-dollar match on a broad range of employment and training services for food stamp recipients. Various state/local and public/private expenditures are eligible for the match.

Under the Connecticut law, most FSET match funds received by the state will be directed to community colleges and other employment and training providers to implement poverty reduction strategies, based on best practices and aimed at reducing poverty or the risk of poverty for specific target populations. Preference will be given to providers who are part of a community collaborative whose strategies are aligned with the state child poverty reduction plan.

The remaining FSET match funds will be used by those community collaboratives to implement poverty-reduction strategies developed through a community process. Collaboratives must include FSET providers and local partners such as municipalities, higher education institutions, business associations, and others.

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) will administer the state effort to direct FSET match funds to poverty reduction efforts. The new law requires the department to report annually on the outcomes using a results-based accountability framework. It authorizes the

department to maximize food stamp enrollment and employment and training participation in order to increase the amount of potential match funding.

In 2004, Connecticut enacted a law to require state planning and implementation to reduce the number of children living in poverty by fifty percent by the year 2014.

The state's Child Poverty and Prevention Council, chaired by the Governor's policy and budget chief, issued its recommendations for attacking child poverty in a 2005 plan. The Council convened a nonpartisan panel of national experts to narrow the list in 2007, and it is developing an economic model for predicting which of the options would bring about the greatest reduction in child poverty.

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For more information, visit the Poverty section of the Connecticut Commission on Children website, at [www.cga.ct.gov/coc/poverty.htm](http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/poverty.htm), or contact:

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