



**State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**



Commission on Children

**Testimony of Elaine Zimmerman
Executive Director
Connecticut Commission on Children**

**Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
February 11, 2010**

Senator Prague, Representative Hamm, Representative Villano and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elaine Zimmerman. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Commission on Children. I am here today to request that you sustain our budget of \$530,420 for next year. The Governor has recommended deletion.

Children are not a constituency or a special interest group. They are our next adults and workers. Thousands of these children and youth need an entity representing them. But they cannot vote and have no voice up here.

Children are the primary asset for any state. Their growth is our growth. When there is a disinvestment in children, the moral compass points downward. But there is also a jarring effect on competitiveness. Our state feels this now.

The Commission on Children

The General Assembly created the Commission on Children through Section 46a-126 of the General Statutes with bipartisan support. We are mandated to advance public policies in the best interest of children.

In our work, we 1) develop landmark policies for children, 2) bring dollars and donated skills to the state, 3) lead in public information for children and youth, 4) perform key research on children's needs, 5) bring the family to government and government to the family, and 6) are recognized as the best coordinating entity for children in the nation. This costs Connecticut sixty five cents per child.

We are often the bridge between the family and the state. The Commission averages 350 calls per week from local citizens and parents. We average 800 hits on our website per week. State and local policy leaders utilize our agency approximately 30 times per week.

The Commission brings in twenty dollars conservatively for every dollar invested in our agency. We take every opportunity to inform you of federal financing opportunities as well as raising dollars to bring to agencies. These dollars do not come to our agency. They go to other state agencies and towns for children and families.

This year we helped 95 towns come in for SNAP E& T dollars and raised 9.25 million in reimbursements. You can see this in the map before you. Not only did we raise the funds and organize the communities to get these dollars, but we helped towns work across boundaries, regionally. In hard times it is not so wise to throw out a revenue-generating entity.

Children and the Recession

Most recently we have been leading on the impact of the recession on children. As soon as the recession threw a shadow on our state, we were studying the results of this economic downturn on children. Nationally, this recession is anticipated to cause three million more children to fall into poverty, which will trigger \$1.7 trillion in long-term losses to the U.S. economy.

In Connecticut, 35,000 children will fall into poverty costing 800 million dollars to our state economy. The recession has become a middle class issue. More than one-quarter of those using food pantries are working families. Homelessness has risen in the suburbs and rural sectors by over 30 %. We are hearing signs of this daily.

Waterbury school teachers report more children coming to school tired and stressed. In Willimantic, they cannot keep up with the number of children who need to be transported to school who have moved into homeless shelters. The school nurses in Stamford are so concerned about child hunger, they are organizing WIC and food stamp signups. In Derby/Ansonia some teachers are putting extra food out on their desks knowing that the children are packing up the food for dinner. In Bridgeport more youth are coming alone, without family, to receive free meals. They are bringing home a tray of food for someone else. This is a new phenomenon.

The Commission has drafted legislation with the Children and the Recession Task Force to ensure the strongest protections for children during this fiscal crisis. We are also working with leaders in Washington, D.C., to make sure our state takes every opportunity and identifies every dollar that might assist our children.

Children who fall into poverty now will not recover when the economy recovers. What we do now will influence nearly a decade of children's lives. The last two recessions reveal that children stay poor for five to seven more years after a recession ends. This is not the time to cut out the agency that promotes their health, safety, and learning.

The Commission performs the following functions:

Model policy design

- We staff you on policies that have been the first of their kind or model laws for the states. We have worked closely with many of you, guiding initiatives on school readiness, early

reading, child poverty reduction, bullying, after-school programs, federal funds maximization, lead abatement, fatherhood, toy safety, parent leadership, child nutrition, and obesity reduction, to name a few. We have defined trends, studied both challenges and opportunities, brought in experts and customers, and driven model public policy.

Accountants on cost effectiveness

- We designed our state's return-on-investment *Children's Stock Portfolio*. This was conducted well before this recession to advise you on what is cost effective and successful for children. This was not done based on other states. It is a state return on investment specifically for Connecticut.

Innovations

- We innovate new practice where the gap is too large and nothing has filled it. When it was clear that families were not part of government and government did not reach families, we designed the first family civics initiative for parents in the country, called the Parent Leadership Training Institute. This initiative gives parents the tools and confidence to be voices for children in their schools, communities and state.
- Over the past decade, PLTI graduates have generated \$1.1 million in volunteer time in our state.
- PLTI was formally recognized by Congress as one of the top ten innovative practices in all the states-and was honored by the Ford Foundation and Good Housekeeping Magazine.
- PLTI has been replicated in seven other states and was just included in Colorado's Race to the Top application as an innovative model to improve their school outcomes.

Scholars on best research and practices

For example we analyzed:

- The impact of the recession on children in Connecticut across the urban, rural and suburban sectors.
- The impact of both 9/11 and Katrina on the children in our state. This research went national as the most in-depth study of natural and unnatural disaster on children. It was used by Congress and helped argue for a parallel committee in DC which has now taken place. Connecticut wrote the only legislation in the nation on children and unnatural disaster.
- How long children were waiting in foster care for adoption. These findings propelled our state's comprehensive adoption law.

- The impact of racial integration in the early years on children's notion and acceptance of difference. This facilitated integrated early preschool programming.
- The impact of school readiness in the kindergarten classroom. This study became the basis for our current analysis of preschool programs.

Agents of trend analysis and results based accountability

- We have been analyzing trends and bringing them to you for 15 years in *The Social State of Connecticut* which we created with then Senator John Larson. It was the first law of its kind to require a review of the state's social health as a measure of quality of life for our families. The social health index became a civic tool for the public and policy leaders to see what is and is not working over a thirty year trend line among eleven indicators on quality of life. The Graustein Memorial Fund has been a partner.
- The current *Social State* shows you, among eleven indicators, very high racial and ethnic disparities, more young children committing suicide, very high dropout rates in our cities, and an increase in hate crimes. This is very troubling as the recession cuts into resources that meet these needs. The Index is followed by a special section on youth. Given the recent changes in our state youth laws, the Index will help us note the outcomes over time. The Tow Foundation is a partner on this section.

Fundraisers for the state

The Commission brings in twenty dollars conservatively for every dollar invested in our agency. We take every opportunity to inform you of federal financing opportunities as well as raising dollars to bring to agencies. These dollars do not come to our agency. They go to other state agencies and towns.

Recent examples of funding brought in or potential funding we are working on include:

- FSET 50/50 Match Funds valued at \$9.25 for 95 towns.
- TANF Emergency Fund valued at \$133 million
- Urban Issues and Children – valued at 2 million
- Parent Engagement – valued at 1 million

We work extensively with the National Conference of State Legislatures on federal fund opportunities and are providing information on all the incentive opportunities and billing opportunities for which Connecticut is eligible to garner federal funds.

Civics and the Practice of Democracy

- We insist on civic engagement in all we do, with a focus on the family. Our agency is recognized for bringing customer voice to issues. We know how to reach parents and youth. We teach the context and ensure civic skills so that any parent or youth seeking to share ideas, can participate.
- Most recently we worked with Congressman Larson's Youth Cabinet on children in the recession.
- We have graduated over 2000 parents from our leadership schools for families to improve the lives of children both in school and in community.
- We have designed a new curriculum, in partnership with the Center for School Change, for parents to partner with schools in making them high quality institutions of learning. This curriculum, called Parents Supporting Educational Excellence, is helping parents improve and stay connected to their schools. Children connect when parents connect.

Leaders on prevention rather than crisis

Prevention offers dignity, cost savings and true outcomes. Other states are replicating this strategy.

- We ensured that our homeland security team knew where children were should there be a natural or unnatural disaster. Now there is a data system with child care locations so that the children who are not in school will be accounted for in a disaster. First responders in our state are highly sensitive to the needs of children through training and a committee we created focused strictly on disaster and children.
- We guided and wrote the cutting-edge bill on prevention with the Speaker that shifts our budget from crisis to prevention for children and requires the Governor to give a report on prevention spending in her state address.
- We studied how to talk about prevention most effectively – and designed a major Game Plan on Prevention with Coach Calhoun. This was on television, radio, print-all from dollars we raised. *Playbook for Prevention* is a best seller for the state, at no cost to you.

We serve as the bridge between the community, family and the state

- The Commission averages 350 calls per week from local citizens and parents.
- We distribute over 180 products per day to the public on children's development. This ranges from products for every new parent in hospitals, in both English and Spanish, to t-shirts with immunization schedules, to booklets on the importance of reading to children. Our products are also used in other states due to their clarity, access and art designs.

- Statewide, we partner with mayors, reach youth and parents, work with grandparents, help the librarians, partner with youth service bureaus and work with the police.

Partners with you, as well as Congress

We have worked extensively with our Congressional delegation on early brain research, school readiness, early reading, homeland security and children, youth leadership, children and the recession, the TANF Reauthorization, and the extension of the TANF Emergency Fund. All to help our state's children.

Staffing

We made a commitment to build this agency up so that you had the most exceptional staff for your child planning and child policy needs. This includes a former staff member of the U.S. House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families under Congressman George Miller and Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, the former editor of *Weekly Reader*, the former head of the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic, a former news reporter from a reputable daily newspaper, and a former chief of staff in the executive branch.

We have three bi-lingual staff members to reach growing populations in our state. I myself was chief of staff for all of family policy for the state of California under Speaker Willie Brown and staff to the human services committee on child care, poverty reduction and all of human services. I worked for Congresswoman Bella Abzug and am now the NCSL Staff Vice-Chair on Human Services and Welfare for all of the states.

These combined staff skills lead to an understanding of how change happens for children. This agency offers strong research, outstanding products, consumer design that truly reaches the public across educational level, high acumen in public policy, strategic sense and an understanding of each branch of government and the community. We are proud of building this for you and hope that this leads to those of you who do not use the agency as much as you might, using it more-- rather than paring it down. We are at your service.

Summary

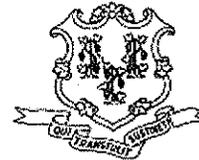
Thank you. We hope to keep working for you and the 800,000 children and their families that depend on us. We will continue to give you a proven return on investment.

“Whatever the issue may be, the Commission seeks out the authoritative information, identifies the knowledgeable leaders in the field and defines the best practices. In doing so, the Commission informs the legislative process and the general public on those policies that have proven effective in advancing the health and well being of children. If we didn't have the Commission, we would have to invent it.”

Peter Libassi, formerly of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

2009 Annual Report

“There is no other resource like the Commission on Children. Their ability to conduct rapid and thorough research keeps Connecticut informed about the circumstances of children and families as well as cutting edge solutions to problems families face.”

Jennifer Carroll, parent

Introduction: The country’s most severe recession in a generation has cost the nation more than five million jobs since it began in late 2007. Connecticut has entered an economic recession that will affect children and families for decades to come. Three things have become painfully clear:

- Virtually all the progress made in children’s economic well-being since 1975 is likely to be wiped out by the downturn.
- The impact is especially severe for low-income children of color.
- Children who fall into poverty now will feel the impact well past the economic recovery.

The Commission on Children searched for the best national economists on the impact of the recession on children. First Focus, a nonpartisan research group based in Washington, D.C., has developed estimates of the economic costs relating to two aspects of recession-induced child poverty in Connecticut: lost earnings and poorer health outcomes. Specifically:

- An additional 35,000 Connecticut children will fall into poverty during this recession.
- As adults, these children will earn an average of \$19,000 less per year than their Connecticut peers who avoided poverty.
- By age 37, they’ll be 20 percent less likely than their peers to report being in very good health.

- The economic cost to Connecticut from projected earnings loss and poorer health status of these children will run to \$800 million per year.

The Commission worked with state legislators to develop a Task Force on Children and the Recession. In June, 2009 the Speaker announced the formation of such a task force to buffer the number and impact of 35,000 children falling into poverty. Representatives Jarmoc and Urban provide leadership as Co-Chairs of the Children in the Recession Task Force. The Commission provides strategic planning and model policy design.

The Commission’s overarching work is now focused on promoting the health, safety and learning of Connecticut’s children through 1) research, 2) education and outreach, 3) key partnerships, 4) civic engagement and 5) revenue generation.

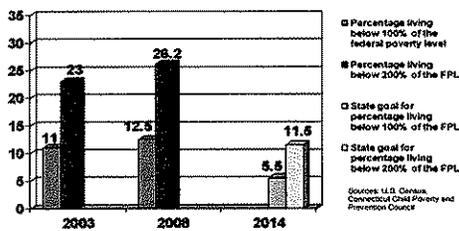
“Whatever the issue may be, the Commission seeks out the authoritative information, identifies the knowledgeable leaders in the field and defines the best practices. In doing so, the Commission informs the legislative process and the general public on those policies that have proven effective in advancing the health and well being of children. If we didn’t have the Commission, we would have to invent it.”

Peter Libassi, Former General Counsel
Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington, DC

RESULT: No Child Lives In Poverty

Indicator 1: Child Poverty

Connecticut Children in Poverty



The story behind the baseline:

The poverty rate for children living below 100% of the federal poverty level has remained constant for the last five years. The poverty level for those families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level, generally considered the working poor, is growing. Both cohorts will predictably increase under the current recession.

Poverty contributes to poor social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for children and hinders cognitive development. Although Connecticut's overall poverty rate is lower than most states, the income disparities impacting urban and minority families are among the largest in the nation. The Connecticut labor force is projected to lose over \$1 billion in future productivity for every year that the current number of Connecticut children live in poverty.

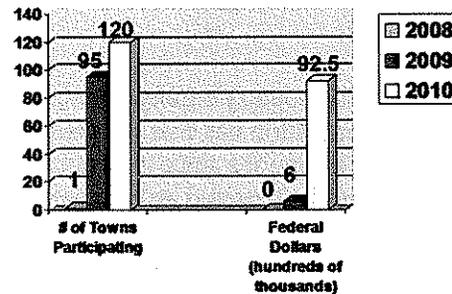
What the Commission on Children did:

- Worked with legislators to create a state goal of poverty reduction by 50% in ten years. This law, P.A. 04-238, was the first in the nation and has been replicated in other states.
- Drafted policy for legislators to create the Child Poverty and Prevention Council (CPPC) intended to bring state branches together to bolster prevention and reduce poverty P.A. 04-238.
- Analyzed costs and effects in the state's ten-year poverty reduction plan issued by CPPC.
- Raised the funds and brought in national experts across political party and values, to advise the Child Poverty and Prevention Council on proven strategies to reduce child poverty by 50% in ten years. Mediated this work and wrote up the shared consensus findings.
- Linked RBA to the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and helped facilitate the RBA process.
- Worked with Legislators and NCSL to identify an additional \$133 million in potential funding through the TANF Emergency Fund.
- Worked with legislators to pass Public Act 08-161 which mandates using the SNAP E&T

reimbursement dollars to address family poverty reduction and to align strategies with Connecticut's state goal of reducing child poverty by 50% within 10 years.

- In 2008, Connecticut submitted for \$606,348 in SNAP E&T reimbursement from the federal government.
- The Commission assisted in the development of thirteen new SNAP E&T community collaboratives comprised of 95 towns which will generate an estimated \$9.25 million back to the state on an annual basis.

Maximizing SNAP E&T Federal Reimbursement

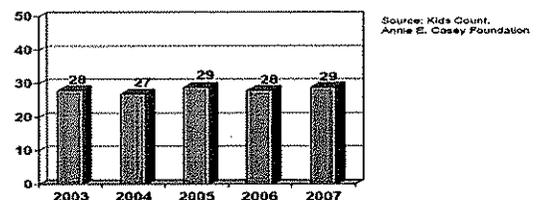


Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maximize the federal stimulus package immediately to buffer against increased family poverty utilizing opportunities in housing, nutrition, jobs and education.
- Reorder state priorities to invest strictly and adequately in proven poverty reduction interventions as proposed by national experts and CPPC.
- Analyze family impact – in addition to state fiscal impact - of proposed policies being considered by the General Assembly.
- Link state contracts to poverty reduction outcomes.
- Develop SNAP E&T collaboratives in towns not yet participating.

Indicator 2: Employment

Percent of Connecticut children in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment



The story behind the baseline:

A significant barrier to economic security is a lack of job skills, training and education needed to obtain a

good job at a fair wage. Low-income families also face other barriers such as transportation, health care and child care – all of which are required in order to succeed in the workplace. The prevalence of Connecticut families with children who do not work full-time, year round has remained constant for five years. The recession will soon increase these numbers.

Many working families continue to struggle to make ends meet and some rely on work supports such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly Food Stamps. The SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program is designed to help SNAP recipients obtain the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. SNAP E&T's 50/50 matching funds component enables states to be reimbursed for 50% of non-federal expenditures on employment and training and related support services to SNAP recipients – without a state cap on the funds received.

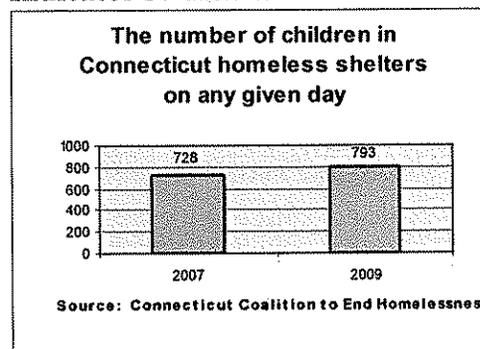
What the Commission on Children did:

- Uncovered the SNAP E&T 50/50 federal funds maximization opportunity. Opened the door for Connecticut to receive millions of dollars annually in federal poverty reduction funds focused on employability and wages.
- Worked with legislators to mandate the use of SNAP E&T 50/50 federal reimbursement funds to achieve state poverty reduction goals in P.A. 08-161. By giving preference and targeted funds to community collaboratives, the law provided incentives for community leaders to work together, across sectors, to reduce poverty.
- Worked with collaborating partners throughout the state to publicize the SNAP E&T opportunity.
- Held state and regional events to publicize the DSS RFQ for SNAP E&T.
- Established the Fatherhood Initiative in 1999 with legislators to promote the full and active emotional and financial involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Collaborate with state legislators, CPPC and the Children in the Recession Task Force to maximize federal funds for employment.
- Continue to work with local communities and DSS to maximize funds and ensure that they are used for proven poverty reduction strategies.
- Bring together all regions to share strategies in employability as well as methods of increasing family food stamp utilization to address nutrition and bring in more federal dollars.

Indicator 3: Homelessness



The story behind the baseline:

Annually, one out of every 365 Connecticut children receives services at a homeless emergency shelter. From 2007 to 2009, the number of homeless children in our state increased by 9 % (from 728 to 793). Homeless children have higher rates of acute health problems, learning disabilities, and socio-emotional problems, coupled with lower rates of participation in early childhood programs, than their peers. Nationally 20% of school-age homeless children do not attend school; among those that do attend, 41% change schools throughout the year. Each school change sets a student back 4-6 months academically.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Led visits to shelters and held community forums with legislators, DSS and SDE's McKinney-Vento experts to assess service needs for young homeless children.
- Promoted comprehensive services for young homeless children and raised \$50,000 in private funds that were then matched with public funds to create pilot programs throughout the state.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Provide quality early care and education to homeless children.
- Provide job training, life skills training, job search assistance, and housing assistance for parents in homeless families.
- Streamline enrollment for services; e.g., Food Stamps, WIC and HUSKY.
- Increase affordable housing in the state and maintain programs providing housing/rental subsidies.
- Utilize TANF Emergency Funds to help pay for homeless services and to support families before a housing crisis to reduce foreclosures and evictions.

Barriers:

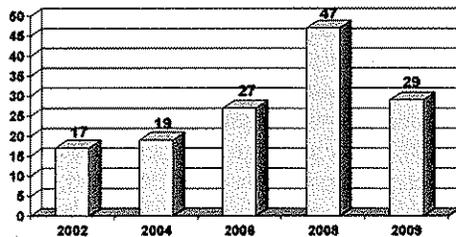
- Connecticut has not implemented certain proven poverty reduction strategies, or adopted a state earned income tax credit.

- The budget crisis eclipses the poverty issues with some maintaining there are not enough dollars now to act comprehensively.
- Fiscal crises lead to a silo response where each town argues for its discrete needs.
- There are certain interventions that are costly and are less likely to be adopted widely enough to benefit the working poor and middle class.

RESULT: Parents are Engaged and Informed about Children’s Programs and Policies.

Indicator 1: Family Civic Engagement

Communities Offering Parent Leadership Training with Parent Trust Funds



The story behind the baseline:

Connecticut policy recognizes parents as the ultimate consumers of services and programs for children and need to be involved from the onset as partners in public initiatives. Intentional efforts to increase family civic engagement improve public policy and program operation while diversifying the network of involved parents.

The number of communities offering parent leadership training had more than doubled in the last six years. This trend is largely due to public demand and a public and private partnership supporting the Parent Trust Fund for civic engagement. Funds for the Parent Trust were allocated in the '09-'10 state budget but not released by DSS.

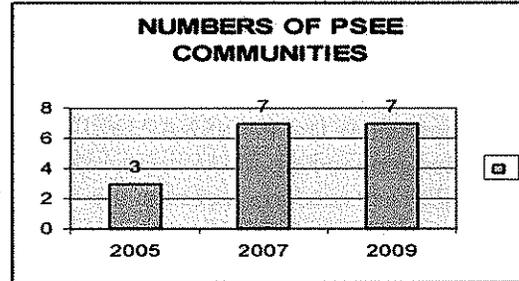
What the Commission on Children did:

- Created the concept of a Parent Trust and brought in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to create the launch with \$250,000 dollars.
- Led on the development of the Parent Trust Act, a state-sponsored family civics initiative established in 2001 by the Connecticut General Assembly. This act leverages public and private funding to support parent leadership training.
- Established a management team to coordinate the statewide infrastructure for the Parent Trust Fund with state and philanthropic partners.
- Created special outreach and education to involve more fathers in leadership training.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue and expand the Parent Trust Act to embed family civics in Connecticut.
- Continue outreach to increase fathers’ engagement in leadership roles for their children.
- Promote intergenerational family civics to bring in grandparents raising grandchildren.

Indicator 2: Parent Involvement in Schools



The story behind the baseline:

Research shows that children with parents involved in their learning develop better grades, test scores, long-term academic achievement, attitudes and behaviors. Children do best when families and schools share information and partner in creating quality learning environments.

Families, schools and communities have come together to triple the number offering Parents Support Educational Excellence (PSEE) training between 2005 and 2009.

“When families are involved at home, at school, and in the community, children do better and schools get better.”

**Anne Henderson
Annenberg Institute for School Reform
Washington, DC**

What the Commission on Children did:

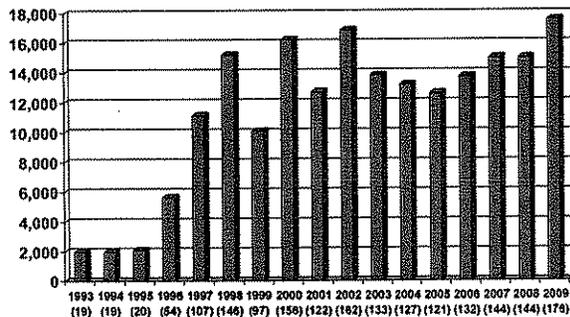
- Collaborated with the Connecticut Center for School Change to develop a curriculum on how parents can help schools be more effective through family-school partnerships.
- Leveraged private funds from the Lone Pine Foundation to field-test the curriculum.
- Obtained federal funds through the US Department of Education to support statewide implementation.
- Led on passage of a state law requiring school districts to report on parental involvement through Strategic School Profiles (P.A. 06-167).
- Analyzed parental involvement data required in P.A. 06-167.
- Linked parent partnership in schools with the state’s Race to the Top application.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue to monitor parental involvement data in School Profiles.
- Expand the number of communities offering Parents Supporting Education Excellence (PSEE) training to increase parent-school partnerships.
- Bring the statewide parent leadership infrastructure to scale when the Race to the Top application is approved.

Indicator 3: Parents as Civic Leaders

PLTI Volunteer Hours
(Number of graduates in parentheses)



The story behind the baseline:

Parents’ opinions are often unheard. They sometimes lack advocacy skills or civic knowledge but not the motivation or commitment to make change in the best interest of children. Parents prepared to lead are better prepared to advocate for children, volunteer in their community, serve on non-profit boards, lead parent-teacher associations and serve on boards of education. Evaluation data shows that on average, a PLTI graduate volunteers 2 hours per week in their community. In the last decade, PLTI graduates are estimated to have generated over \$1.1 million in volunteer hours.

“The Liberty Bank Foundation supports PLTI because it reaps so many rewards. We are bankers looking to invest and get a good return. This has been a good investment.”

Sue Murphy
Liberty Bank Foundation
Executive Director

What the Commission on Children did:

- Researched what motivates parents and what supports they need to become engaged in children’s programs and public policy.
- Established the nationally recognized Parent Leadership Training Institute in 1992, which provides parents the knowledge and skills to meaningfully lead for the next generation.

- Evaluated longitudinal outcomes to determine civic participation and ascertain what keeps parents engaged in community over years.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

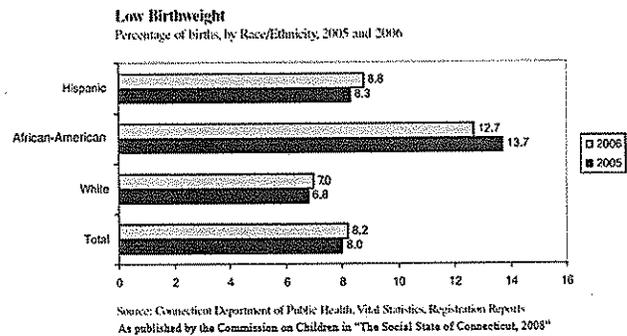
- Train state and local leaders on how to work with parents and bring them in as community assets.
- Bolster opportunities for parents to lead on policy and program, particularly within the current economic context.
- Expand public-private partnerships to increase and embed the family as a true partner in children’s policy.
- Ensure the public and private funds are allocated and released through the Parent Trust so communities can offer parent leadership training.

Barriers:

- The Parent Trust was moved to the Department of Social Services instead of the Department of Education, where it was meant to be located.
- The Department of Social Services did not put out a request for proposal and lapsed the dollars, though the Legislature allocated the dollars.
- The Governor recommended that the Parent Trust be eliminated from the state budget.
- People do not understand the importance of family engagement and tend to minimize it, particularly when dollars are short. Parents are not seen as a serious constituency or real asset to the state.

RESULT: Children are Born Healthy and Remain Well and Safe.

Indicator 1: Low Birth Weight Babies



The story behind the baseline:

Low birth weight (LBW) infants are those born weighing less than 5 pounds 8 ounces. The national target for LBW babies is 5%; in 2006, 8.2% of Connecticut newborns were LBW, reflecting an increase of 24% between 1990 and 2006. Impacts of LBW include infant death, cerebral palsy, vision impairments, cognitive deficiencies, developmental and learning disabilities, poor educational performance and behavioral problems.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Created and published the Harvard-acclaimed report, *First Words, First Steps*, identifying low birth weight as a priority area for the state.
- Created cross-agency effort to address LBW.
- Raised \$150,000 from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, partly to address LBW in Hartford.
- Sought to finance low birth weight interventions utilizing the federal TANF Emergency Fund.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Reduce preventable hospitalizations for LBW that cost the state \$194 million in 2006 by implementing proven prevention programs including:
 - Link WIC and SNAP E& T and make sure all pregnant women who are eligible are receiving these benefits;
 - Promote smoking cessation for pregnant women; and
 - Provide groups for pregnant women to offer support and information on best health practices such as Centering Pregnancy.
- Continue and expand quality home visitation programs to ensure parents have the knowledge, skills and resources for competent parenting.
- Educate teens about their health and pregnancy prevention.

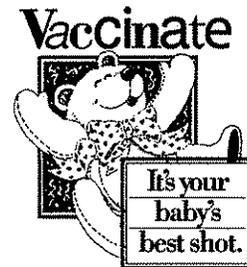
Immunization saves lives, lowers medical costs and prevents serious illness and disabilities. For every dollar invested in just one Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP) vaccination, Connecticut saves \$6.21. Connecticut is in the top five states in the nation for on-time immunizations and has been for the past 12 years.

What the Commission on Children did:

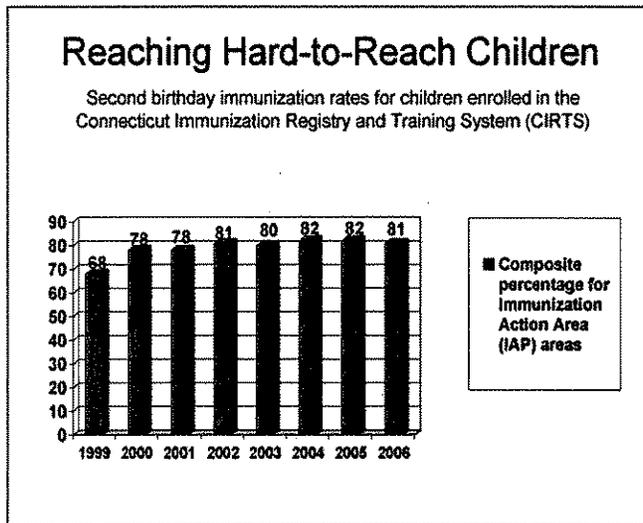
- Developed targeted outreach campaign aimed at hard to reach low income parents.
- Received a CDC award for outstanding outreach campaign, media, print materials, and public awareness efforts.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Continue COC/DPH/IAP partnership to achieve immunization goals.
- Continue public awareness campaign on the effective science of immunization.



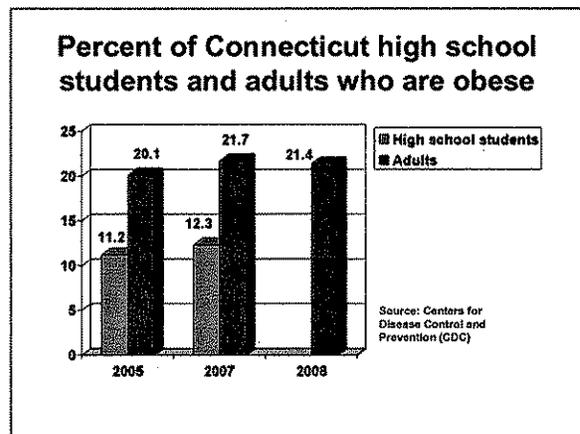
Indicator 2: Childhood Immunization



The story behind the baseline:

Immunization rates for the hard-to-reach children in Connecticut have improved and remain high (81%). The barriers to getting children immunized including transportation, understanding of the importance of immunization and free vaccines are continuously addressed.

Indicator 3: Childhood Obesity



The story behind the baseline:

Obesity is the second-leading cause of preventable death in the United States, after smoking. Reports show an increasing number of children (12% of high school students) and adults (21%) in Connecticut are obese.

Unhealthy food choice, eating behaviors and reduced activity levels are major factors contributing to

overweight and obesity. Only one in five Connecticut high school students eats the recommended five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables and most do not meet the recommended physical activity level.

In one year, obesity-related health problems in Connecticut added \$856 million in adult medical expenditures, including \$665 million in Medicaid and Medicare costs.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Provided guidance on policy development to Sustinet obesity task force in 2009.
- Developed proposals for obesity prevention partnership with minor league sports team.
- Brought best practices to state attention through major conferences in 2005 and 2008.
- Designed and led a series of regional forums on obesity with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities with a grant from the National League of Cities.
- Worked with the American Heart Association to obtain state budget funding for child obesity prevention initiatives at the local level that highlighted initiatives at 2008 state forum.
- Wrote *Playbook for Prevention* and CBS Radio PSAs for mayors to encourage families to use local resources.
- Developed proposed statewide data tracking system for obesity and chronic diseases with state and local partners.
- Worked with Legislators to increase access to bicycle routes, walking trails and sidewalks to schools (P.A.- 09-154).

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maintain state reimbursement for healthy food school programs.
- Establish statewide data tracking system for obesity and chronic diseases, based on Commission proposal.
- Launch statewide public awareness and education campaign.
- Partner with First Lady Obama's new child obesity reduction plan.

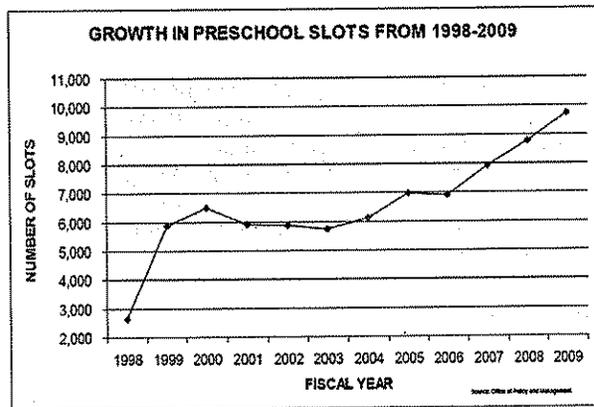
Barriers:

- A large and unresolved budget deficit impedes development of effective, new strategies.
- Declining budgets may result in slight declines in success and sustainability over time.
- Child obesity crosses into the realm of family decision making and policy recommendations will only succeed if they focus on proven public health strategies.

- Most people are unaware of low birth weight issues and outcomes. This will take a major public education push.

Result: Children and Youth are Ready for and Succeed in School.

Indicator 1: Preschool Enrollment



The story behind the baseline:

Critical neurological development occurs in early childhood. The brain develops to 90% of its capacity in the first five years. A child's ego, self esteem and learning patterns are developing and linked together before a child reaches kindergarten. Quality preschool is proven to assist in these important years with cognition, social and emotional skills, gross motor skills and language and numeracy development. Poor quality care or no early care is often the starter fuel for inequities in educational achievement.

This graph shows that the number of children utilizing quality preschool slots has gone up nearly four times since preschool was made available for three and four years olds in 1998. Between 1998 and 2009, we have gone from 2,700 children attending preschool. This increase shows a positive trend. This trend should continue to close the gap for those not yet in preschool due to lack of supply, limited access or family working hours.

What the Commission on Children did:

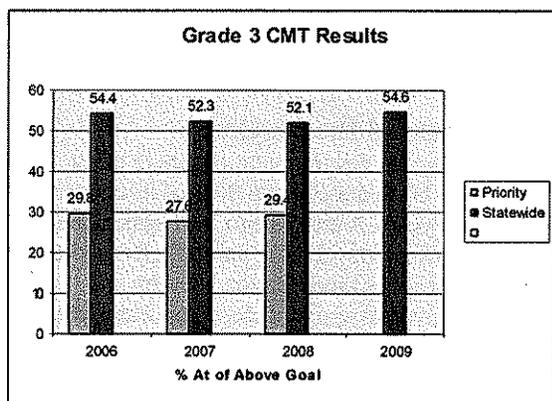
- Designed a system of preschool with standards, goals, evaluation, parent engagement, health care linkages and early language development in the priority school districts.
- Helped draft and win passage of Connecticut's comprehensive school readiness law in 1997 (P.A. 97-259).
- Provided ongoing research and develop policy on the School Readiness system in Connecticut.
- Conducted ongoing public awareness and education campaign and provided materials and booklets to the public.

- Designed a building expansion plan and financing mechanism with CHEFA as the intermediary to address the shortage of facilities in the urban sector.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maintain investment in child care and school readiness programs to meet demand.
- Invest in child care workforce through scholarship and increased wages using the federal stimulus package.
- Align standards and financing for the early childhood education system across departments. This would increase supply, align reimbursements and promote a stronger system.
- Expand infant and toddler programs to address current shortage.

Indicator 2: Reading



NAEP Grade 4 Reading Proficiency Rates

	2002	2003	2005	2007
National Public	30*	30*	30*	32
CONNECTICUT				
All Students	43	43	38	41
White	52	54	47	52
Black	17	12	12	15
Hispanic	15	18	15	16
Not Eligible	51	53	48*	53
Eligible	21*	18	14	13

* Value is significantly different from the value for the same jurisdiction in 2007.

The story behind the baseline:

A child who is not reading by the end of first grade has a one in eight chance of ever becoming a proficient reader. The impact of low literacy is seen at many levels including school retention, special education, drop outs, unemployment and crime. Connecticut has one of the greatest achievement gaps in reading in the states.

The state CMT results reveal strong differences in performance between low and moderate income

children and middle class children. Similarly, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading test above reveals White students significantly outperforming Black and Hispanic students. Since 95 % of all children can be taught to read, the achievement gap in reading calls for critical review.

A THIRD OF STUDENTS TAKING TEACHING TEST FAIL

	Test Takers	Total Passed	Pass Rate
Southern Connecticut State University	168	96	57%
Sacred Heart University	146	111	76%
Central Connecticut State University	132	77	58%
Eastern Connecticut State University	130	75	58%
University of Bridgeport	102	70	69%
University of New Haven	89	58	65%
Quinnipiac University	55	47	85%
St. Joseph College	54	31	57%
University of Hartford	44	28	64%
University of Connecticut	35	32	91%
Teach for America	30	28	93%
Western Connecticut State University	18	6	33%
Fairfield University	17	13	76%
Mitchell College	15	5	33%
TOTAL	1,035	677	65%

Teachers who know the current research and are trained in the science of reading can help every child read. Yet, not all teachers know how children learn to read. They have not been taught assessment and intervention. So when a child is not catching on, they do not know how to assist and succeed in a timely manner. Not all higher education institutions teach their pre-service teachers the science of teaching reading to young children. This is both a national and Connecticut challenge.

What the Commission on Children did:

- Wrote the draft policy for the education committee that requires teachers to have the “skills and knowledge to teach reading effectively.” This became statute.
- Brought in national experts on higher education and the teaching of reading. Sought and acquired the research on the different national tests for teacher qualifications and presented the findings to Higher Education leaders.
- Facilitated the development of the state’s Reading Panel to create a Reading Blueprint for the teaching of reading in grades, kindergarten through grades three (P.A. 99-227).
- Brought Haskins Laboratories to state policy and practice to utilize their research on the brain and proven methods for the teaching reading.
- Raised \$3 million from Congress through work with the federal reading panel and NICHD to test summer reading institutes and targeted reading academies with Haskins Labs and SDE.

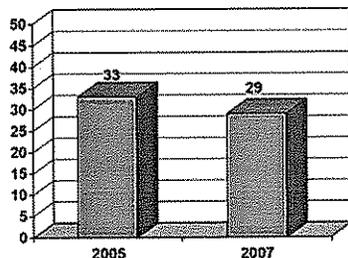
- Drafted a bill that required a pre-service test in the science of reading for college students in teacher degree programs. The test findings could help us see what reading courses needed to be added in various higher education institutions to bolster the skills set in reading. The bill was not passed but the State Board of Education voted to implement the strategy and the pre-service test is now in place.
- Raised dollars with the national Casey Foundation and the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund to pilot community literacy interventions in the early years with evaluation.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Provide external mentors for current teachers in kindergarten through grade three in the science of reading.
- Ascertain what skills are not adequately taught in higher education, utilizing the findings from the preservice test in reading and improve curriculum to meet reading goals.
- Inform parents, particularly low-income parents, how children learn to read and what they can do at home while partnering with the schools in grades kindergarten through grade three to improve reading scores.
- Bolster family literacy and parent child reading programs for families with infants and toddlers and two year olds.

Indicator 3: Bullying

Percent of Connecticut high school students bullied on school property in the previous year



Source: Connecticut School Health Survey, Department of Public Health (DPH)

The story behind the baseline:

When we fail to prevent bullying, the results impact learning, safety, and personal well-being. Targets of bullying often feel isolated, lonely, or depressed. Sometimes they attempt suicide. Schools can become violent, dangerous places where children feel unsafe and less able to concentrate and learn. As the chart above indicates, nearly one-third of high school students have been bullied.

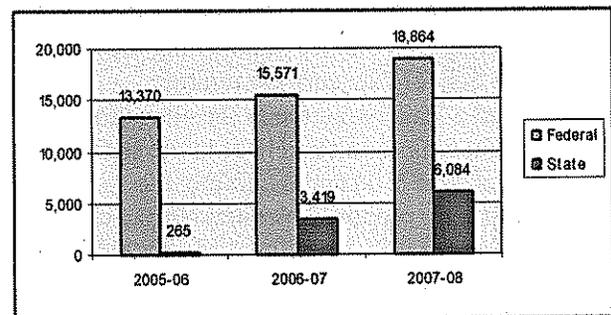
What the Commission on Children did:

- Brought international anti-bullying best practices and experts to assist Connecticut. Trained hundreds of school officials on anti-bullying approaches through regional forums and individual school meetings.
- Obtained significant philanthropic funding for anti-bullying initiatives under state Safe Learning Grant Act.
- Issued *Brave Enough to Be Kind* report and *Playbook for Prevention* section on "Safe Learning" to educate the public.
- Advised legislators on strategies to improve state law culminating in 2008 revision that required school districts to submit bullying data annually to SDE, along with their bullying policy in 2009, and for SDE to analyze and report on the policies and the needs of school districts (P.A. 02-119, P.A. 06-115, P.A. 08-160).

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Implement research based anti-bullying strategies. Train schools in bully reduction strategies.
- Hold school districts accountable for compliance with the anti-bullying law and help them understand what they must do.
- Establish decrease in bullying as a performance measure in school improvement plans.

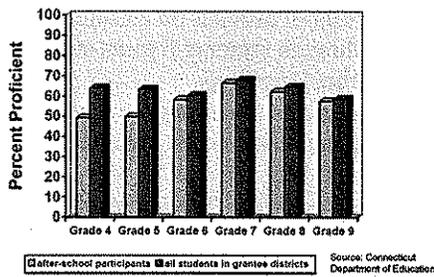
Indicator 4: After School



The story behind the baseline:

The chart shows an increase in the number of students enrolled in after school programs due to increased state and federal funding. In 2007-08, a total of 24,948 students were enrolled, out of which 18,864 (76%) students were enrolled in federally funded programs. Research indicates students involved with safe, enriching programs with competent, caring adults show increased school attendance and academic achievement.

Reading proficiency: Students in after-school programs compared to all students



What the Commission on Children did:

- Formed the after school alliance with public and private stakeholders to facilitate the statewide effort to build a strong after school system in Connecticut.
- Identified cost benefit for after school in the Commission’s report: *A Children’s Stock Portfolio: One Smart Investment*. For every \$1 invested, it saves taxpayers \$3; an additional \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million is saved by putting one high risk youth on the right path in cost avoidance for detention and long term incarceration.
- Helped garner C.S. Mott grant funds for after school system building (SDE administers the funds).
- Promoted public policy on after school including P.A. 03-246 establishing the state After School Advisory Committee.
- Played a leadership role in the allocation of new funding for after school in the state budget for FY 08 and 09. (Note: the Governor’s proposed biennial budget cuts funding from \$5.5 million to \$500,000 for FY 10 and 11.)

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Maintain investment in after school programs at the 2008-2009 levels.
- Maintain the After School Advisory Committee to continue quality improvement and maximization of private dollars.
- Provide ongoing professional staff development in proven reading instruction and classroom management.

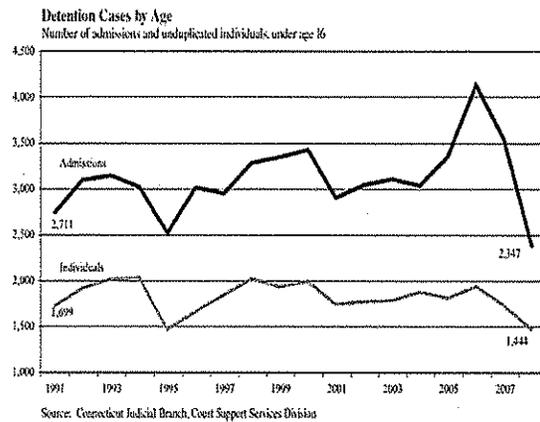
Barriers:

- Preschool and after school programs cost money. In a declining economy it is hard to bring to scale what is necessary to help children thrive.

- There is some defensiveness among higher education institutions being told what and how they should teach. This is starting to change and the pre-service tests shown here will help with this shift in performance.
- Bullying will often increase in times of family stress when children witness upsets and abuses of power at home.
- Bullying prevention and after school programs can be erroneously considered ‘soft’ services or extras in a difficult economy yet they provide a necessary safety net for learning.

RESULT: At-Risk Youth Will Succeed & Avoid Long-Term Involvement with the Juvenile Justice System

Indicator 1: Juvenile detention cases



The story behind the baseline:

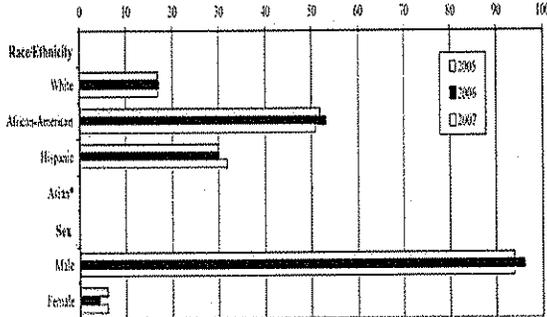
The current trend indicates that both the number of youths detained, as well as the total number of admissions to Connecticut’s three detention centers, showed dramatic decreases from 2006 to 2008. New policy direction aims to address the underlying causes for the behavior to prevent long term involvement in the system.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Fully implement our statute to keep 16 and 17 year olds out of the juvenile justice system.
- Strengthen local Youth Service Bureaus.
- Maintain investment in Juvenile Review Boards.

Indicator 2: Young people in correctional facilities by race/ethnicity and gender

Young people in correctional facilities by race/ethnicity and gender
Percent of total, under age 19, 2005-2007



Source: Connecticut Department of Correction *Less than 1 percent

The story behind the baseline:

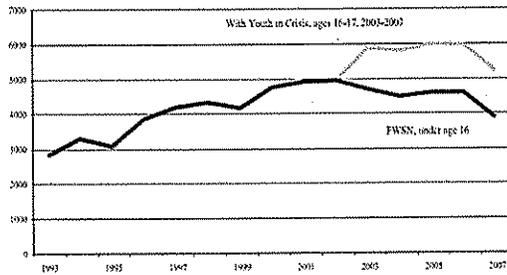
Children ages 14 and 15 who are charged with the most serious crimes as well as youths aged 16 and 17 charged with criminal offenses are treated as adults in the court system. The number of incarcerated youth has risen steadily from 673 in 2004, to 838 in 2007. For offenders under 16, the population is very small. A large majority of youth in prison (85%) were at least one grade level below their peers and had an average reading level of third grade.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Implement Raise the Age legislation to move 16 and 17 year olds into the Juvenile Justice System instead of the adult criminal system.
- Implement proven strategies for reading assessment & intervention and behavioral health issues

Indicator 3: Families with Service Needs

Status Offense Referrals
1993-2007, Families with Service Needs, under age 16
2003-2007, with Youth in Crisis, ages 16-17



Source: Connecticut Judicial Branch

The story behind the baseline:

As of October 1, 2007, status offenders could not be held in detention. A 2008 evaluation of the newly established four Family Support Centers examined outcomes: of the 44 clients completing the program, 81% have not been referred or adjudicated since they completed their program. Overall there has been a 30% decline in referrals to Court for further action.

Proposed strategies to turn the curve:

- Expand Family Support Centers from four to nine centers.
- Address systemic issues of poverty and the achievement gap among minority populations.
- Implement research-based truancy reduction programs in schools.
- Institute accountability measures for programs.
- Keep teens in high school and disallow their early departure.

Barriers:

- The budget deficit has made it difficult to fully implement targeted prevention strategies and recent changes in law.

Population Results

Children are healthy and safe.
No child lives in poverty or suffers from discrimination.
Children and youth succeed in school.

Population Indicators

Low birth weight babies	Preschool Enrollment	Child Poverty Rate
Employment rate	Childhood Obesity Rate	Afterschool Programs
Homelessness	Youth Leadership	Reading Scores
Parental Involvement in Schools	Racial and Gender Inequities	
Family Civic Engagement		

Foundational Strategies

Model Policy Development	Leadership Development	Public Awareness
Legislative Action	Community Capacity-Building	Civic Engagement
Systems- Building	Research-based prevention	Return-on-Investment
	Federal Funds Maximization	

Key Partnerships

Business	Parents	State Agencies
Philanthropy	Community Civic Leaders	Congress
Community-Based Organizations	Faith-Based Organizations	Universities
School Leaders	The Judicial Branch	Youth

Organization Core Values

Innovation	Integration	Information	Impact
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Create innovative strategies to overcome barriers.
Focus on outcomes with impact.
Promote racial and economic equity.
Work across sectors.



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State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Commission on Children



The Commission on Children: A Smart Investment in Hard Times

Effective leader for children and families: The Commission on Children is the conscience and voice for children in Connecticut government. It develops landmark policies for children; brings dollars and donated skills to the state; connects families to government; partners with national policy leaders; and is recognized as the best coordinating entity for children in the nation.

A **“good buy”**: the Commission costs the state just 65 cents per child. With a staff of 7, a volunteer board and an operating budget under \$531,000, the office is lean and cost-effective.

Revenue-generator for Connecticut: The Commission has brought multi-million dollar resources to Connecticut to train school teachers to teach reading, help parents develop job skills, improve school climate and more.

This year alone, the Commission brought 22 times its own budget in federal funds through the SNAP E & T program. The Commission is responsible for **\$9.25 million in federal funding** now on its way to 95 towns and cities to help families with employment and increased wages. And now the Commission is helping the other 74 towns apply. This funding stands to grow annually to \$15 million.

Cutting-edge track record: The Commission spearheads policies that put Connecticut in the forefront of children’s policy in the nation. The Commission wrote and designed key laws on:

- *School Readiness* – comprehensive state system for quality early care and education
- *Parent Trust Act* – parent engagement initiative to maximize family input in policy
- *SNAP E&T* – state system to bring millions in federal dollars to struggling communities
- *Child poverty* – first state in the nation to set 50% child poverty reduction benchmark
- *Prevention* -- first state to set goal for state agencies to invest 10% for prevention
- *School climate* – requires anti-bullying strategies in all schools, model policies & training
- *Lead poisoning elimination* – mandates universal lead screening in pediatric visits
- *Social health index* – the first state to report out 30 year trend analysis in quality of life.
- *Reading Panel*-established the skills and knowledge teachers need to teach reading

Accountant on cost effectiveness: The Commission took on the task of truly analyzing which Connecticut children's programs worked and what the cost savings were. In *A Children's Stock Portfolio*, the Commission quantifies the return on investment for home visitation, mentoring, preschool, early reading success and other best practices.

Innovator: The Commission innovates new practice where the need is strong. It created the **Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)**, the first family civics initiative for parents in the nation. A national model now being replicated in many states, PLTI gives parents the tools to be voices for children in schools and communities. The Commission's PLTI program, at 14 statewide locations, has yielded hundreds of parent leaders and an estimated \$1.1 million in volunteer time.

"The Commission on Children is the brain trust for children's issues in Connecticut."
-- Joseph McGee, Vice President, The Business Council of Fairfield County

Partner for change with legislators, business leaders, families and youth: The Commission works with state legislators and the Congressional delegation to develop policies on early brain research, school readiness, early reading and the recession. The Commission partners with mayors, business leaders, children's librarians, law enforcement, homeland security, parents, grandparents and youth.

Leader for prevention rather than crisis: The Commission studied how to talk about prevention most effectively, partnered with media, coordinated a statewide Harris poll, and held listening sessions across the state. Working with UConn basketball coach Jim Calhoun, the Commission designed the popular 'game plan,' *Playbook for Prevention*, a play by play description of what parents, educators, and policymakers can do to ensure our state's children grow into healthy, productive adults. This continues to be a best seller in demand.

Agent of trend analysis and results-based accountability: The Commission has been analyzing trends affecting children and families for 15 years in *The Social State of Connecticut*. This "social health index" is a civic tool to see what is working over a 30-year trend line among 11 quality-of-life indicators such as infant mortality, unemployment and youth dropouts. It helps us know what is working and what needs attention.

Scholar on policy options: The Commission staffs the General Assembly on policy and research. In 2009, the Commission extensively advised legislators on federal stimulus opportunities to help families and held a packed public forum on the critical opportunities under the new ARRA law. The Commission's policy research has covered infant-toddler development, how children learn to read, child obesity prevention, and the implication of preschool on the achievement gap.

"The Commission on Children has been an important factor in placing Connecticut at the cutting edge of dealing with child and family concerns."
-- Dr. Edward Zigler, Yale University and founder of Head Start

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



1st Quarterly Report of
**House Speaker Christopher Donovan's
Task Force on Children in the Recession**

Submitted January 2010

Representatives Karen Jarmoc and Diana Urban
Task Force Co-chairs



Overview

On June 16, 2009, Speaker of the House Christopher Donovan announced that he was forming a legislative task force to find ways to help Connecticut's youngest citizen's deal with the impact of the current recession.

Connecticut thus became the first state in the nation to undertake such an effort. On the day the Speaker made his announcement, experts attending a forum organized by the Commission on Children provided estimates of just how badly the downturn will affect future generations:

- An additional 35,000 Connecticut children will fall into poverty during this recession.
- As adults, these children will earn an average of \$19,000 less annually than their Connecticut peers who avoided poverty.
- The economic cost to Connecticut from forgone earnings and poorer health of these children will run to \$800 million per year.
- The percentage of Connecticut residents living in poverty jumped by the largest margin of any state in the country between 2007 and 2008, according to the U.S. Census. The percentage of Connecticut children living in families with incomes under the federal poverty level rose from 11.1 percent in 2007 to 12.5 percent in 2008.

Representatives Karen Jarmoc and Diana Urban were named co-chairs of the Task Force, whose members included not only legislators but designees of Connecticut's congressional delegation and representatives of social-service agencies. The deliberative process began with national experts – including economists, other scholars, and foundation leaders – talking about the cost of recessions historically. By mid-December 2009, the Task Force had heard approximately 10 hours' worth of presentations and testimony, over three meetings and a public hearing, which was held in Hartford for residents of the 1st Congressional District. The Task Force intends to hold one hearing in each of the state's five districts, with the next slated for January 23, 2010 in Enfield, which is in the 2nd District.

Below is a summary of what the Task Force learned regarding the recession's impact on many aspects of children's lives, along with proposed policy approaches for addressing these problems.

“There is no greater risk to Connecticut's future than the adverse effects of this recession on our children.

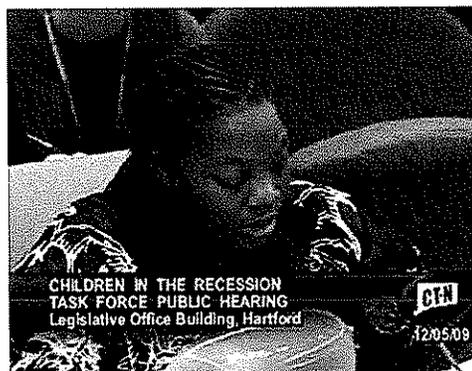
The evidence suggests that children will feel the impact of the economic crisis far into the future. They are our future, and we must do everything we can to protect them from the ravages of the recession. From economic security to hunger, healthcare, family and parental support, child care, education and safety, our children are at risk and it is our responsibility to care for their needs.” --Speaker Donovan

Hunger and Nutrition

- Nearly 11% of the households in Connecticut are “food insecure,” meaning the heads of these households are at high risk of being unable to feed themselves or their families. This year food pantries report a 30-50% increase in requests for assistance from 2008.
- The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has proven the most effective tool for ensuring that people don’t go hungry, yet an estimated 30% of the Connecticut families that are eligible do not participate.
- In the 3rd quarter of 2008, the 2-1-1 info-line received 6,000 calls regarding food and nutrition questions; at the end of the 3rd quarter of 2009 9,000 calls were received.
- Half of all U.S. children will, at some point during their childhoods, live in households that use food stamps, according to a recent study conducted by Washington University in St. Louis and Cornell University in New York.

Possible solutions: Streamline the application process for federal nutrition programs; create more access to DSS regional offices; increase the efficiency of DSS in processing applications and providing services for SNAP; and do more and better outreach for SNAP and child nutrition programs, such as school meals, summer feeding, and after school snack, and WIC.

Key presentations: Lucy Nolan, executive director of End Hunger Connecticut, and Gloria McAdam, president and CEO of Foodshare.



“I want to give you a picture of how this economy is knocking out an entire family – a very hard-working family. I have a mother who’s sick and a step-father who just lost his job ... In our refrigerator right now there are about two things: a half-bottle of juice and a box of eggs. The tension in our house is hard. I stay away as much as possible ... I have completed two programs in cooking, I have five different certifications. I’ve applied for five or six jobs a day, and I’ve gotten no interviews ... Sometimes I say to a friend, ‘OK, what can I do to get some quick money?’ I know the answer to the question, but I won’t go there. I don’t want to throw everything away, but I think about it – believe me, I do.”

- Latasha Fitzwilliams, 20, of Hartford, at the Task Force’s public hearing for residents of the 1st Congressional District, December 5, 2009.

Housing and Homelessness

- The extent of the housing crisis in Connecticut revealed itself on January 28, 2009, when communities across the state conducted their third-annual count of homeless people and found that 32 percent of the homeless families they encountered had jobs. It was also found that:
 1. Sixty percent of the adults in homeless families had 12th-grade educations or higher.
 2. Rural and suburban homelessness saw a dramatic increase from 2008, especially for families and children in families; both were up 33%.
 3. Homeless shelters throughout Connecticut are at or above capacity.
- Of Connecticut's 400,000 renting households, fully 100,000 earn less than 50% of the median income and spend more than half that income on housing, leaving little for food, clothing, transportation, and other necessities. These families are "this close" to homelessness.
- Children experiencing homelessness face great challenges. High mobility, precarious living conditions, and severe poverty combine to present significant educational barriers. They perform below their peers in math and reading and are more likely to be held back.
- For low-income families seeking to buy homes, the opportunities have withered. In 2000, 65.2% of Connecticut ownership units were valued at less than \$200,000; by 2008, the percentage had fallen to 19.8%.
- The state has built virtually no affordable housing in the last decade; it ranks 47th in units built per capita since 2000. Worse, 4,500 of the existing affordable rental units could revert to market-rate prices unless preserved in the next six years.

Possible solutions: Preserve the remaining housing available to low-income families; create more safe and affordable housing in communities across Connecticut; increase homelessness-prevention programs; and secure full implementation of the federal McKinney-Vento Act to ensure homeless children and youth receive education.

Key presentations: David Fink, policy and communications director, Partnership for Strong Communities, and Carol Walter, executive director, Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

Employment—and Unemployment

- Connecticut's unemployment rate stood at 8.4% by November 2009, with 91,000 workers filing for UI benefits weekly.
- Just under half of unemployed workers receive unemployment insurance benefits, but in Connecticut that money doesn't go nearly as far as it does in other states. Connecticut's replacement rate, or the percentage of the worker's former wages replaced by UI, is only 29.9%. The U.S. average is 34.9%.
- The impression that Connecticut is a high-wage state can be misleading, because Connecticut is also a high-cost state.
- Joblessness for 16-to-24-year-old black men has reached "Great Depression proportions" according to the Washington Post. Nationally, it was 34.5 percent in October—more than three times the rate for the general U.S. population.

Possible solutions: The "Two Generation Now" approach, which promotes the economic well-being of parents while simultaneously ensuring that young children are healthy, safe, and succeeding in school. It does this by supporting programs that help low-income adults get and hold jobs and access available public benefits.

Also, the state could avail itself of the TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) Emergency Contingency Fund – a \$5 billion fund created by the federal government to provide additional fiscal relief to the states. The fund is meant to provide basic assistance, non-recurring short-term benefits, and subsidized employment, providing states with a 4:1 match based on increased spending over the 2007-2008 fiscal years. Connecticut is eligible for up to \$133 million.

Key presenters: Jamey Bell, Connecticut Voices for Children; John Padilla, Annie E. Casey Foundation; Jane McNichol, Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut; and George Wentworth, National Employment Law Project.



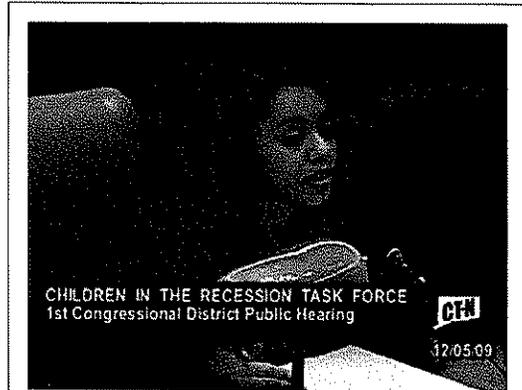
"I come from a middle-class family ... We bought a house before the recession started, and both of my parents had jobs. My mom lost her job almost three months ago ... Now my main concern – instead of school and extracurricular activities and finding ways to get scholarships to go to college – is finding a job. I've applied for jobs, but there aren't any for students after school ... I'm worried that one day I'll come home and my dad won't have a job either. It's just difficult, because high school students shouldn't have to deal with supporting their families."

- Glastonbury High School junior Kara Googins, at the Task Force's public hearing for residents of the 1st Congressional District, Dec. 5, 2009.

Higher Education

- Enrollment in Connecticut's public colleges and universities is at an all-time high, due in large part to unemployed or underemployed workers seeking graduate degrees in hopes of making themselves more employable, the high quality of education offered, and the affordability compared to private schools.
- Students transferring from Connecticut community colleges continues to increase, up 51% since 2001. At seven of the 12 Connecticut Community Colleges in 2009, the number of students who transferred to the Connecticut State University System (CSUY) matched or surpassed previous record levels.
- More than 1,000 students transferred from out-of-state colleges and universities to CSUS universities in Fall 2009, and four out of five, about 83%, were Connecticut residents. That's up from 76% last year.
- Financial aid is also at an all-time high, though it is not enough to meet the need.
- Ninety-three percent of the students in the state university system come from Connecticut, and 86 percent of the graduates remain in Connecticut after graduation.
- Parents of high school children say the past year has seen a significant drop in how much of their kids' college education costs they can cover. Fidelity Investments, in its third-annual College Savings Indicator study, found that parents can cover only 11 percent of the total cost of their children's college education. That's down from 15 percent in 2008.
- A large percentage of Connecticut's future workforce must come from urban areas, yet only 20% of the students currently in those areas will get college degrees.

Possible solutions: Continue the governor's policy of using state bonding for undergraduate and graduate students to receive student loans at reasonable interest rates through credit unions. In the meantime, community colleges already are looking for creative ways to save students money, such as reusing more books, creating payment plans and partnerships, and providing manufacturing scholarships.



"Along with being a student, I have four jobs on campus. Most of the students at my school work at least two jobs to help pay their way through college. I have friends who've taken semesters off to go back home to help their families ... It does affect our grades ... Are we really going to be the driving force [in this country] if, by the time we graduate, we're already tired of working?"

- Bualong Ramize, Wesleyan University student, at the Task Force's public hearing for residents of the 1st Congressional District, Dec. 5, 2009.

Key presenters: Chancellor David Carter, Connecticut State University System, and Martha McLeod, president of Asnuntuck Community College.

Family Health Care

- Nationally, at least 121,000 children have lost health insurance coverage as a result of parents losing their jobs in the recession, according to Congress' Joint Economic Committee.
- From 2006 to 2008, Connecticut averaged 255 infant deaths per year, according to the state Department of Public Health. Of those, three-quarters occurred before the 28th day of life, and half of those were linked to low birth weight, which is strongly connected to poverty. Infant mortality tends to be a lagging indicator in recessions, so the state may see an increase this year.
- New polling data from the University of Michigan Health System shows that as parents face increasingly difficult financial decisions in this recession, it's often their children's health that gets short shrift -- especially in uninsured and lower-income families.

Possible solutions: The Department of Public Health has compiled a report on plans to counteract low birth weight and solve the disparities in prenatal care. Recommendations include: a) maximize co-enrollment in Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Medicaid for all eligible women; b) expand tobacco cessation programs targeted at pregnant women; c) promote use of the Centering Pregnancy model of prenatal care. These programs may be paid for through the state tobacco funds and the TANF Emergency Funds.

Key presenters: Dr. Carol Stone, Family Health Section, Department of Public Health

Family and Community Violence

- Nationally, we are seeing an increase in family violence, especially in areas such as neglect, because families are unable to provide basic needs to children. There is also the possibility for the recession to result in increased fatalities of children.
- The recession will cause children to suffer more family violence. It is a stressor for struggling parents already involved in abusive relationships with family members.
- A study from Liz Claiborne and The Family Violence Prevention Fund shows an increase in teen dating violence -- directly tied to the economic downturn. The study says nearly one in

three teens reports being the victim of verbal, physical or sexual abuse. Nearly one in four says they've been harassed by e-mail or text messaging. Nearly half of the respondents report being controlled, threatened or pressured to do things against their will.

Possible solutions: Family violence results in long-term negative impacts on the family. Dealing with the trauma immediately when it happens can help negate the long-term effects on children. Early intervention is critical. Individuals working around children such as teachers or child care workers need to be trained on how to recognize if abuse is occurring and how to respond to it. Connecticut should ensure adequate support for family violence prevention.

Key presentations: Jeanne Milstein, Connecticut Child Advocate, and Erika Tindill, executive director, Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Teens and After-School Programs

- Youth unemployment is at its highest level since World War II.
- The New York Times reports that over the past two years, “government officials and experts have seen an increasing number of children leave home for life on the streets, including many under 13.” These teenagers, having seen their families suffer foreclosures, layoffs, and other economic calamities, often believe they’re doing their families a favor by leaving.
- After-school programs across the nation are struggling with both recession-related budget shortfalls and recession-related enrollment increases. A national survey last spring revealed that three in five programs have seen their funding drop in the past two years. Meanwhile, demand for the programs keeps rising -- in part because of the recession, as laid-off parents seek help in providing for their children.
- Capital Workforce Partners reports that summer youth employment programs in Connecticut helped put 4,000 youths to work this summer, but an additional 7,000 applicants had to be turned away for lack of funds
- Connecticut’s workers already are the eighth-oldest in the nation, and a major “brain drain” – caused by youth leaving the state for better employment opportunities – is making the problem worse.

Possible solutions: Ensure opportunities in service and after-school to keep youth safe and engaged; continue to build youth employment; and expand summer youth work opportunities, using TANF emergency funds.

Key presenters: Thomas L. Phillips, Capital Workforce Partners, and Gwendolyn L. Busch, Youth@Work.

Coordination and Systems

- Connecticut parents in need of unemployment benefits, food stamps, and other recession-related services have suffered unnecessary delays, frustration, and embarrassment because of state requirements that they apply for each service separately.
- Families seeking food assistance have had trouble reaching intake staff or have been told to return the next day due to high demand and a shortage of caseworkers.
- Some DSS intake workers have as many as 2,000 cases.
- In the case of child care, parents who applied for the service have been told within weeks that they'd have to reapply because the state had closed and restarted the service.
- Many other states have avoided this – and saved money in the process – by consolidating their applications for various services, often by relying on new technologies.

Possible solutions: Train social-service employees to handle client intake across agency lines; utilize technology to make it easier for people to determine whether they're eligible for programs; create a master contract or coordinated leadership team across agencies and branches of government to address the specific and discrete needs of families in the recession and systemic coordination, as we did following the 9/11 attacks.

DISCLAIMER: This report relies on the data publicly available at the time of publication. The Task Force understands that the data is subject to change.

Task Force Membership

Representative Karen Jarmoc, co-chair
Representative Diana Urban, co-chair

Senator Eric D. Coleman
Senator Paul Doyle
Senator Jonathan Harris
Senator Robert Kane
Senator Edward Meyer
Senator Anthony Musto
Senator Edith Prague
Representative Catherine F. Abercrombie
Representative Jason Bartlett
Representative Michelle Cook
Representative Mae Flexer
Representative Gail Hamm
Representative DebraLee Hovey
Representative Marie Lopez Kirkley–Bey
Representative Barbara Lambert
Representative Chris Lyddy
Representative Patricia Billie Miller
Representative Kevin Ryan
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Eva Bunnell
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Maggie Adair
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Maureen Brennan
Enfield Parents for Education

Annie Chittenden
CT SafePet

Susan B. Dunn
United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut

David Fink
Partnership for Strong Communities

Jim Gatling
New Opportunities, Waterbury

Mark Masselli
Community Health Center Inc.

Jeanne Milstein
Connecticut Office of the Child Advocate

Maria Mojica
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

Amy Morales
Alcorn Family Resource Center, Enfield

Lucy P. Nolan
End Hunger Connecticut!

David Radcliffe
Meriden Children’s First

Erin Reig
Parent advocate

Michelle Edmonds-Sepulveda
City of New Haven

Erika Tindill
Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Lynda Trebisacci
Parent advocate

Elaine Zimmerman
Connecticut Commission on Children

ESTIMATED TOTAL CONNECTICUT SNAP-ET REIMBURSEMENT:

Ansonia and The Valley.....	\$ 545,874.50
Bridgeport.....	\$ 611,471
Bristol	\$ 117,139
East Hartford	\$ 778,303
Hartford	\$ 1,999,398.50
Meriden-Middletown-Wallingford.....	\$ 576,040
New Britain	\$ 351,110
New Haven.....	\$ 1,000,000
Norwalk-Stamford.....	\$ 366,005
Norwich-New London.....	\$ 477,508
Northwest CT	\$ 376,958
Waterbury	\$ 525,976.30
<u>Windham Region.....</u>	<u>\$ 1,525,241</u>

STATE TOTAL **\$ 9,251,024.30** **95 TOWNS**

1. Ansonia and The Valley

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Birmingham Group Health Services, Inc. (BGHS) – P</p> <p>2. Bridges, A Community Support System, Inc. – P</p> <p>3. TEAM, Inc. (Training, Education and Management, Inc.) – P</p> <p>4. Valley Regional Adult Education (VRAE) – P</p> <p>5. Valley Council of Governments</p> <p>6. Valley Community Foundation</p> <p>7. Shelton Economic Development Corporation</p>	<p>1. Ansonia</p> <p>2. Derby</p> <p>3. Milford</p> <p>4. Monroe</p> <p>5. Orange</p> <p>6. Oxford</p> <p>7. Seymour</p> <p>8. Shelton</p> <p>9. West Haven</p>	<p>BGHS = \$270,603.50</p> <p>Bridges = \$248,836</p> <p>TEAM = \$7,178</p> <p>VRAE = \$19,257</p> <p>Total = \$545,874.50</p>

2. Bridgeport

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Housatonic Community College (HCC) – P 2. FSW, Inc. – P 3. Bridgeport Adult Education (BAE) – P 4. ABCD – P but not yet submitting as such 5. Bridgeport Hospital 6. Fairfield County Community Foundation</p>	<p>1. Bridgeport</p>	<p>HCC = \$241,836.50 FSW = \$119,174.50 BAE = \$250,460 Total = \$611,471</p>

3. Bristol

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Tunxis Community College (TCC) – P 2. Bristol Adult Education (BAE) – P 3. Plainville Adult and Continuing Education (PACE) – P 4. Farmington Continuing Education (FCE) – P 5. Bristol Community Organization (BCO) – P 6. Plainville Community Food Pantry 7. Plymouth Community Food Pantry</p>	<p>1. Avon 2. Bristol 3. Burlington 4. Canton 5. Farmington 6. Harwinton 7. Plainville 8. Plymouth</p>	<p>TCC = \$12,750 BAE = \$83,774 PACE = \$5,115 FCE = \$8,000 BCO = \$7,500 Total = \$117,139</p>

4. East Hartford

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Goodwin College – P 2. Stone Academy – P 3. East Hartford Adult Education – P 4. Community Renewal Team (CRT) – P, but not yet submitting as such 5. ChildPlan 6. East Hartford Department of Social Services</p>	<p>East Hartford</p>	<p>Goodwin = \$600,000 Stone Academy = \$150,238 Adult Education = \$28,065 Total = \$778,303</p>

5. Hartford

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Capital Community College – P 2. Hartford Adult Education – P 3. Hartford Public Library (HPL) – P 4. The Village for Children and Families – P 5. Community Renewal Team (CRT) – P 6. Connecticut Puerto Rican Forum (CPRF) – P 7. Family Life Education (FLE) – P 8. Catholic Charities (CC) – P 9. Literacy Volunteers - P 10. Hartford Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) 11. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) 12. Hartford Office for Youth Services (HOYS) 13. Center for Urban Research (CUR) – P</p>	<p>Hartford</p>	<p>CCC = \$606,348 Adult Education = \$445,861 HPL = \$150,000 Village = \$17,010 CRT = \$281,062 CPRF = \$300,000 FLE = \$17,952 CC = \$94,042.50 Literacy Vols = \$87,123 Total = \$1,999,398.50</p>

6. Meriden-Middletown-Wallingford

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Middlesex Community College (MXCC) – P 2. Meriden Adult Education – P 3. Middletown Adult Education – P 4. Wallingford Adult Education – P 5. New Opportunities – P but not yet submitting as such 6. Community Renewal Team (CRT) – P but not yet submitting as such 7. Women and Families Center 8. Middlesex Coalition for Children 9. Meriden Department of Health and Human Services</p>	<p>1. Cromwell 2. East Haddam 3. East Hampton 4. Meriden 5. Middletown 6. Old Saybrook 7. Portland 8. Rocky Hill 9. Wallingford 10. Westbrook</p>	<p>MXCC = \$181,502 Meriden Adult Ed = \$ 115,695 Middletown Adult Ed = \$231,782 Wallingford Adult Ed = \$47,061 Total = \$576,040</p>

7. New Britain

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Charter Oak State College (COSC) – P 2. New Britain Adult Education (NBAE) – P 3. Literacy Volunteers of America (LVCC) – P 4. Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain (SSCNB) – P 5. Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA) – P but not yet submitting as such 6. Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) – P 7. New Britain YWCA – P 8. Central CT State University’s Institute for Technology and Business Development (CCSU ITBD) – P 9. New Britain Discovery Collaborative 10. Workforce Partners Collaborative 11. Central CT Center for the Study of Social Policy (CPPSR) 	<p>New Britain</p>	<p>Charter Oak = \$161,636</p> <p>NBAE = \$92,500</p> <p>LVCC = \$15,500</p> <p>SSCNB =</p> <p>OIC = \$61,738</p> <p>YWCA = \$19,736</p> <p>CCSU ITBD =</p> <p>Total = \$351,110</p>

8. New Haven

Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)	Towns Involved	Estimated Reimbursement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gateway Community College – P 2. Workforce Alliance - ? 3. Community Action Agency of New Haven - ? 4. Christian Community Action Agency - ? 5. New Haven Adult Basic Education – P 6. Easter Seals/Goodwill - ? 7. New Life Corporation - ? 8. Project MORE - ? 	<p>New Haven</p>	<p>?</p>

9. Northwest Connecticut

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Northwest Community College (NWCC) – P 2. Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) – P 3. Education Connection – P 4. Western Adult Education (WERACE) – P 5. NW Regional Workforce Investment Board – P, but not submitting as such 6. New Opportunities 7. Susan B. Anthony Project 8. Easter Seals</p>	<p>Towns: 1. Barkhamsted 2. Bethel 3. Bethlehem 4. Bridgewater 5. Brookfield 6. Canaan 7. Colebrook 8. Cornwall 9. Danbury 10. Goshen 11. Hartland 12. Kent 13. Litchfield 14. Middlebury 15. Morris 16. New Fairfield 17. New Hartford 18. New Milford 19. Newtown 20. Norfolk 21. North Canaan 22. Plymouth 23. Redding 24. Ridgefield 25. Roxbury</p>	<p>NWCC = \$97,200 NVCC = \$87,488 Ed Connex = \$151,200 WERACE = \$41,070 Total = \$376,958</p>

	<p>26. Salisbury 27. Sharon 28. Sherman 29. Southbury 30. Thomaston 31. Torrington 32. Warren 33. Washington 34. Watertown 35. Winchester 36. Woodbury</p>	
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10. Norwalk-Stamford

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Norwalk Community College (NCC) – P 2. Norwalk Adult Education (NAE) – P 3. New Economic Opportunitites Now, Inc. (NEON) – P 4. CTE, Inc. – P 5. Stamford Adult Education – P but not yet submitting as such 6. Literacy Volunteers – Stamford/Greenwich (LV) – P but not yet submitting as such 7. Fairfield County Community Foundation (FCFF)</p>	<p>1. Darien 2. Greenwich 3. Norwalk 4. Stamford</p>	<p>NCC = \$292,077 NAE = \$50,000 NEON = \$15,180 CTE = \$8,748 Total = \$366,005</p>

11. Norwich-New London

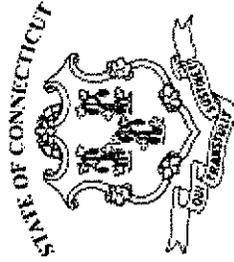
<p align="center">Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p align="center">Towns Involved</p>	<p align="center">Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) – P</p> <p>2. Norwich Adult Education (NAE) – P</p> <p>3. New London Adult Education (NLAE) – P</p> <p>4. Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. (TVCCA) – P but not yet submitting as such</p> <p>5. Norwich Department of Human Services</p>	<p>1. New London</p> <p>2. Norwich</p>	<p>TRCC = \$86,590</p> <p>NAE = \$167,443</p> <p>NLAE = \$223,475</p> <p>Total = \$477,508</p>

12. Waterbury

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) – P 2. Waterbury Adult Education (WAE) – P 3. New Opportunities (NOW) – P 4. Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) – P 5. Family Services of Greater Waterbury – P but not yet submitting as such 6. Literacy Volunteers of Greater Waterbury – P but not yet submitting as such 7. Connecticut Community Foundation 8. United Way of Greater Waterbury</p>	<p>1. Waterbury</p>	<p>NVCC = \$313,488 WACE = \$169,150 NOW = \$24,538.39 NRWIB = \$18,800 Total = \$525,976.30</p>

13. Windham Region

<p>Members (P signifies that agency is Provider, seeking reimbursement)</p>	<p>Towns Involved</p>	<p>Estimated Reimbursement</p>
<p>1. Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) – P</p> <p>2. Eastconn Adult Education – P</p> <p>3. Access, Inc. – P</p> <p>4. Eastern CT State University (ECSU) – P</p> <p>5. United Services, Inc. – P</p> <p>6. WRCC, Inc. – P but not yet submitting as such</p> <p>7. Co-Opportunity, Inc – P but not yet submitting as such</p> <p>8. Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board</p> <p>9. Willimantic Covenant Soup Kitchen</p> <p>10. Windham Human Services Department</p> <p>11. Coventry Human Services Department</p> <p>12. Mansfield Human Services Department</p>	<p>1. Ashford</p> <p>2. Brooklyn</p> <p>3. Canterbury</p> <p>4. Chaplin</p> <p>5. Columbia</p> <p>6. Coventry</p> <p>7. Eastford</p> <p>8. Hampton</p> <p>9. Killingly</p> <p>10. Mansfield</p> <p>11. Plainfield</p> <p>12. Pomfret</p> <p>13. Putnam</p> <p>14. Scotland</p> <p>15. Sterling</p> <p>16. Thompson</p> <p>17. Tolland</p> <p>18. Union</p> <p>19. Willington</p> <p>20. Windham</p> <p>21. Woodstock</p>	<p>QVCC = \$256,025</p> <p>EastConn = \$191,496</p> <p>Access = \$11,050</p> <p>ECSU = \$269,753</p> <p>United Services = \$796,917</p> <p>Total = \$1,525,241</p>



Substitute Senate Bill No. 344

Public Act No. 08-161

AN ACT CONCERNING THE FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILD POVERTY AND PREVENTION COUNCIL.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) As used in sections 1 to 5, inclusive, of this act:

- (1) "Poverty reduction strategies" means a coordinated set of actions which may include, but is not limited to, job search and work experience; education and training, including adult basic education, high school equivalency preparation, adult literacy classes, vocational training and post-secondary education; payment of tuition; case management; related services that improve employability; income safety net services; quality child care during work and job training; family support; and reentry programs, that are based on best practices and aimed at reducing poverty or the risk of poverty for individuals and families (A) who are living in census tracts with high poverty rates, (B) whose incomes are at or below two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level, and (C) who are in one or more of the following target populations: (i) Adolescent parents, (ii) older adolescents and young adults, or (iii) low-income working families; and
- (2) "Food stamp employment and training community collaborative" means a consortium of public and private providers, established pursuant to section 3 of this act, to implement poverty reduction strategies.

Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social Services shall administer a food stamp employment and training program, authorized under the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended from time to time, to provide employment and training activities, support services and other programs and services for recipients of the food stamp program. The program shall provide for the receipt of federal matching funds to the state from the United States Department of Agriculture for funds expended on behalf of food stamp recipients by state agencies, local governments, nonprofit entities, institutions of higher education and other eligible food stamp employment and training providers for employment and training activities that qualify for such matching funds under federal law and regulations. The department shall seek to maximize the use of the federal matching funds provision under the program to the fullest extent permitted by federal law.

(b) Federal grants received under the program shall be used in accordance with federal law and regulations to fund food stamp employment and training activities.

(c) The department shall select providers whose employment and training activities qualify for reimbursement under federal law and regulations to participate in the federal matching funds provision of the food stamp employment and training program. Providers shall be selected in a form and manner prescribed by the Commissioner of Social Services. In selecting providers, the department shall give priority to providers who are members of a food stamp employment and training community collaborative and whose strategies are aligned with the recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and its plan to reduce child poverty developed pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes.

(d) The department shall distribute to providers pursuant to subsection (c) of this section federal matching funds in accordance with section 4 of this act. Such funds shall be used for poverty reduction strategies.

Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) The Department of Social Services shall select among qualified food stamp employment and training community collaboratives to receive federal matching funds in accordance with section 4 of this act. To be considered for receipt of such funds, each collaborative shall demonstrate its capacity to implement poverty reduction strategies to the department in such form and in such manner as the Commissioner of Social Services prescribes. Each collaborative shall identify (1) its priorities for reducing child poverty in such municipality or region, (2) how funds that are received by the collaborative will be utilized, (3) community partners and resources utilized to support poverty reduction strategies, and (4) its capacity to collect relevant data and measure outcomes.

(b) Each food stamp employment and training community collaborative shall establish a governance structure, determine membership and identify or establish a fiscal agent. A collaborative shall consist of at least five member entities representing institutions of higher education, regional workforce development boards, social services nonprofit agencies, business associations, philanthropic organizations, municipalities, community action agencies or other community partners. A majority of the membership of each collaborative shall be food stamp employment and training providers.

(c) Funds provided to a food stamp employment and training community collaborative shall be used to implement poverty reduction strategies in a municipality or region. Such strategies shall be aligned with the recommendations of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council and its plan to reduce child poverty developed pursuant to section 4-67x of the general statutes.

Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009, the Department of Social Services may use such funds from the federal matching funds received by the state pursuant to section 2 of this act as are needed for operating expenses and to employ one staff position for purposes directly related to the administration of the matching funds provision for the food stamp employment and training program, and for any fiscal year thereafter may use such funds as is necessary to operate and administer said program.

(b) The remaining federal matching funds received by the state pursuant to section 2 of this act shall be used for poverty reduction strategies and distributed in the following manner: Seventy-five per cent of such remaining funds shall be provided to food stamp employment and training providers whose expenditures generated the federal matching funds on a pro-rata basis, pursuant to section 2 of this act; and twenty-five per cent of such remaining funds shall be provided to food stamp employment and training community collaboratives selected pursuant to section 3 of this act for implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

Sec. 5. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) On or before January 15, 2009, and annually thereafter from January 15, 2010, to January 15, 2014, inclusive, the Commissioner of Social Services shall report, in accordance with section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services and appropriations, and to the Child Poverty and Prevention Council on the amount of federal matching funds received by the state pursuant to section 2 of this act, the amount used by the Department of Social Services for operating and administrative expenses, the amounts distributed to providers and food stamp employment and training

community collaboratives pursuant to section 4 of this act, the use of such federal matching funds, including the population served, and the programs' outcomes using a results-based accountability framework.

Sec. 6. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2008*) The Department of Social Services, in conjunction with the member agencies of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council, may work with local governments, institutions of higher education, community action agencies and other entities to continue and expand efforts, within available appropriations, to enroll eligible individuals in the food stamp program and to enroll eligible food stamp participants in education, employment and training activities.

Approved June 12, 2008

