

Legal Assistance Resource Center

❖ of Connecticut, Inc. ❖

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Testimony before the Appropriations Committee on the Department of Labor Budget

by Jane McNichol, Executive Director
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Good evening. I am Jane McNichol, Executive Director of the Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, the advocacy and support center for legal services programs in the state. We represent the interests of very-low income residents of the state. LARCC also convenes the Welfare Working Group, a group of about 25 advocates on welfare issues. Since 1996, the Welfare Working Group has monitored the federal TANF program and the state's family welfare program and its impact on low-income families with children in the state.

I am here to express support for the continued funding recommended by Governor Malloy for the **Jobs First Employment Services line in the Department of Labor budget**. This is funding for the services and job supports for families in Connecticut's family welfare program who are striving to move from welfare to work.

This \$17.5 million funds assessments, case management, assistance in preparing for and finding a job, vocational education, adult basic education, subsidized employment and other support services. **The JFES program served over 11,000 parents last year.**

This is far from a perfect system for adults with severe barriers to employment. It has always been underfunded and the strict time limits in our family welfare system make resolving serious barriers to employment difficult. These barriers are higher than in the past in this difficult economy as more people, with better work histories and greater skills, enter the job market.

Over the past year, LARCC, CABHN (the Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs) and the Welfare Working Group interviewed and surveyed participants in the JFES program and providers of education and job training for JFES participants and prepared a report with recommendations. We also researched model programs in other states. The results of this work, with **recommendations for improving the program, are in a report, *Increasing Opportunity***, which was released on January 11. The full report is available on our website, www.larcc.org, and will be distributed next week to all legislators.

Key recommendations for improving the program are:

- **emphasizing long-term poverty reduction and sustainable employment, rather than short-term job acquisition.** This would require providing intensive case management to participants and more flexible time limits.

- **expanding available education and training options** for JFES participants.

Tonight, I would like to be asking for a substantial increase in funding to enable the Department of Labor to implement these recommendations for all JFES participants. But that seems unrealistic.

This year, we are grateful that JFES funding is maintained at essentially current levels. But we believe that, after 15 years without significant changes in the state's welfare system, **it is time to explore ways to make this program more effective.**

The Human Services Committee has raised a bill, **SB 1042, An Act Concerning a Pilot Project Under the Jobs First Employment Services Program**, which would establish, within available appropriations, a small pilot project to provide intensive case management, access to needed education and training programs and extensions of cash assistance for parents in JFES who are actively participating in an approved education, training or subsidized employment program.

For a small number of people, this pilot can be funded within available appropriations. But it cannot be funded if this line item is further reduced and it probably will not be implemented without some direction from this Committee that a portion of the \$17.5 million in this line item be used for this pilot. I will also be testifying at the hearing on the DSS budget to urge that a small portion of the \$120 million designated for the Temporary Assistance to Families – TANF program be devoted to this pilot.

We can begin to take some important steps toward a better welfare to work system for parents, even if we cannot do as much as we would like this year.

Attached to my testimony is a summary of how Connecticut spends its federal TANF block grant funds and required state maintenance of effort funds. The short version is:

Between 1997, when the TANF block grant became available, and 2009:

- spending on **cash assistance** fell from about **\$320 million to \$89 million**
- spending on **“Other” activities**, usually programs that were previously funded with state or other funds, rose **from \$0 to \$195 million**
- spending on **the Jobs First Employment Services program** increased slightly from **\$12 million to \$19 million and is scheduled to fall to \$17.5 million in this budget.**

We may not be able to do better this year. We should do better in the future.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.

How Connecticut Spends its TANF and MOE Funds – 1997 – 2009

Combined TANF and MOE Spending - FFY 1997 – 2009 (in millions of dollars)

TANF is the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant, set up to replace the federal AFDC program. Connecticut is eligible for \$267 million a year in federal TANF funds and we generally receive and spend all that we are eligible for.

MOE stands for Maintenance of Effort funds, the funds that a state is required to spend in order to be eligible to receive federal TANF funds (similar to a match). Connecticut is required to spend \$184 - \$196 million in state MOE funds each year.

The information in the chart below is drawn from reports by the Department of Social Services to the TANF Council or to the Chairs of the Human Services Committee.

	1997	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009
Transfer to SSBG	5.9	24.1	26.7	26.7	26.7	26.2	26.7
Cash Assistance	320.6	202.0	158.4	124.4	125.7	106.8	89.2
Child Care*	75.5	115.0	96.1	38.3	12.5	32.6	27.2
Other Services					0.3	0.1	0
Assistance - Prior Law			6.4	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.1
Other Work Act/Education (Higher Ed scholarships)			.4	16.8	7.7	1.1	0
GoodNewsGarage; DOL Services; Welfare to Work				1.6	1.2	0.3	0
Employment Services/ IPC	12.1	16.0	16.1	15.1	15.8	21.7	18.9
Transportation/Safety Net			5.1	5.3	4.8	4.0	5.6
Diversion							
Rental Assistance				1.8	2.3		
Energy							
Medicaid for Non-Citizens			5.0	8.3	8.6		
Prevention of Pregnancy*	0	0	21.4	38.9	66.4	76.2	70.3
2 - Parent Family Formation*	0	0	0	18.1	7.7	10.0	11.4
Prior Law*			13.0	15.9	15.5	18.7	20.3
Administration	37.3	37.0	37.0	21.5	28.6	34.3	37.3
Information Technology	2.5	1.0	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	.5
Family Supportive Housing (DCF)					0.9		
Other*	0	55.0	65.4	126.4	156.6	163.5	194.7
Total	453.9	450.1	452.7	461.5	484.2	498.9	504.2

* for more details, see attached pages.

OTHER includes:	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	0.7						
State "Medicaid" for Non-Citizens					12.2	18.6	15.1
Faith Based Initiatives				0.1			
Family Violence Prevention							
Outreach Services			2.1	3.8	0.5	0.4	4.2
Supportive Housing (DSS)							0.3
SDE School Readiness			32.9	44.4	54.3	57.7	65.2
SDE Adult Education		0.7	0.8	0.5		0.8	0.7
SDE Family Resource Centers		1.6			0.7		
SDE Priority School Districts							
DCF Case Management Services	28.8	32.2	40.1	40.2	40.1	31.1	34.4
DCF Substance Abuse Screening	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7
DCF Trtm't/Prev/Child Abuse	3.9	3.4	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.6
DCF Family Preservation Services	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.6
DCF Substance Abuse Services	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.5
DCF Local Systems of Care		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1
DCF Community Emergency Services		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
DCF Family Violence Services		0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1
DCF Early Childhood Development		1.8	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2	
DCF Support for Recovering Families			2.6	4.1	0.1		
DCF Child Guidance Clinics							
DCF Family Support Teams				4.5	3.3	3.3	3.5
DCF Supportive Housing							
DMHAS Substance Abuse Grants			0.2				
DMHAS Mental Health Grants			0.9				
DMHAS Managed Service System			0.3				
DCF Investigations			27.2	32.8	36.2	41.2	46.3
DCF Intensive In-home Services			3.7	5.5			
CHEFA Loans to Day Care Centers		2.0					
Certificate Eligibility Development				0.6			
CCMIS (Maximus Contract for CCCP)		7.6	4.8	4.1		7.8	9.5
DCF Individualized Family Support			0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
DMR Family Support			0.3				
DMR Respite Centers			0.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.9
DMR Respite Grants			0.4	0.4		0.4	0.3
Judicial Alternative Incarceration				2.3	2.0	2.3	2.4
Judicial Multi-Systemic Therapy				3.7	3.7	4.0	3.6
Judicial Court-Based Juvenile Assessments				0.7	0.8	0.8	0.4
Unspecified MOE (Other)	18.0						
TOTAL*	56.4	54.2	126.6	156.4	163.3	177.0	194.5

*In some cases, notably 2001, total does not match the total on the summary reports because the spending reports to the federal government were revised and no revision of the more detailed report to the Legislature was prepared.

	2001	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009
PREVENTION OF OUT OF WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES includes:						
Teen Pregnancy Prevention						
Teen Pregnancy	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.8	2.0	1.1
SDE Priority School Districts	7.4	7.5	18.1	26.8	25.9	17.6
SDE Priority School Districts ESH	2.5	3.0	3.8	4.3	2.6	3.5
SDE Youth Services Bureau	2.2	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.5
SDE Transitional School Districts	0.8					
SDE Interdistrict Coop Grant	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.3
SDE Young Parents Program	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2
SDE Family Resource Centers		4.3	7.1	6.4	7.0	5.4
SDE Safe Learning Grant		0.2				
OPM LEAP	2.3	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.8
OPM Neighborhood Youth Centers	2.0	1.0		1.6	1.1	2.2
OPM Grants to Boys and Girls Clubs	0.7	0.1				
OPM Children and Youth Development	0.2					
OPM Truancy Prevention	0.6					
OPM Governor's Prevention Partnership	0.5					
DPH Paternity Registry	0.2					
DPH Pregnancy Healthline		0.1				
DCF Early Childhood Development		2.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3
DCF Extended Day Treatment			3.9	6.7	5.8	6.2
DMHAS Special Population		2.7	17.1	16.7	19.4	22.5
DMHAS Grants for Substance Abuse		0.3				
DMHAS Governor's Partnership		0.1				
DSS Family Planning		0.1				
Judicial IOM						
Judicial Counseling Services		1.1	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.0
Judicial Truancy Services		0.3	0.2			
Judicial STARS		0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6
Judicial JSRC		2.5				
Judicial Juv Justice Center		2.6	3.0			
Judicial Alt Detention Program		2.9	2.6	2.1	1.4	1.3
Judicial Community Detention Program		2.2	2.0	2.5	3.0	2.9
TOTAL	21.5	38.7	66.2	76.5	75.3	70.4

CHILD CARE includes:	2001	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009
Employment Services Child Care	2.8	10.1	0.6	0.8	4.5	4.4
Work Related Child Care	13.8					
Child Care Certificate Program	16.7	12.6	2.0	18.3	26.4	10.5
Transitional Child Care	26.9		10.0	13.6	22.6	12.3
SDE School Readiness	35.5	15.7				
Child Day Care						
TOTAL	95.7	38.4	12.6	32.7	53.5	27.2
2-PARENT FAMILY FORMATION includes:						
Fatherhood Initiative		0.6	0.3	0.5	0.2	0.3
DOC Education and Training		9.7	4.1	5.8	2.2	2.1
DOC Addiction Services for Non-Custodial Parents		7.5	2.8	3.5	6.6	8.6
DMHAS Problem Gambling		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3
TOTAL		18.1	7.6	10.0	9.4	11.3
PRIOR LAW includes:						
DCF Case Management Services	3.1	10.2	9.0	11.8	13.8	14.4
DCF Family Preservation	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5
DCF EA Foster Care & Res. Treatment	6.6	4.5	3.7	4.5	4	3.7
DCF Foster Care "Non-Claimable Balance"			2.0	1.7	1.4	1.6
TOTAL	10.9	15.9	15.5	18.7	19.8	20.2