

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 \$17.7 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 16,000 parents last year.**

Importantly, **the activities of these 16,000 people and the case managers who work with them are responsible for ensuring that Connecticut continues to receive its full federal TANF block grant allotment of \$267 million a year.**

But despite our professed commitment to preparing all Connecticut residents for employment and despite the importance of that \$267 million to the state's budget, we continue to underfund the JFES program and to set up barriers to implementing a program that works well for parents trying to move off welfare.

Attached to my testimony is a summary of how we have spent the \$267 million in TANF block grant money that we have received annually since 1997, as well as the \$184 million in state funds that we must spend to draw down that \$267 million.

Most notable for purposes of this hearing, between 1997, when the TANF block grant became available, and 2010:

- spending on **cash assistance** fell from about **\$320 million to \$92.5 million**, a decrease of \$227.5 million;
- spending on the **Jobs First Employment Services program** increased slightly from **\$12 million to \$17.7 million**, an increase of only \$5.7 million;

The bulk of the money saved from falling welfare caseloads has gone to spending on “Other” activities, usually programs that were previously funded with state or other funds. Spending on “Other” activities has risen from \$0 to \$174 million since 1997.

We can and should do better for the JFES parents. Last summer, the Department of Labor convened a working group to recommend improvements in the JFES program. The working group identified a significant need among JFES participants – **49% of JFES participants lack a high school diploma or its equivalent.** Getting a job in this economy is hard; getting a job without a high school diploma is virtually impossible. But that is what we expect JFES participants to do.

The working group examined model programs from around the country and suggested a number of pilot programs to address the need of JFES participants for education, training and work experience. But the process begun by the working group seems to have stalled. It is not entirely clear from the outside why the process has stalled – but probably lack of money is one obstacle.

You are in a position to help move this important process forward as you make budget decisions in this session. The JFES program is part of Connecticut’s family welfare system. The cash assistance part of the program, known as TFA or Temporary Family Assistance, is run by the Department of Social Services.

While the JFES program is flat-funded in the DOL budget, the Governor proposes to **reduce the TFA cash assistance line item by \$9 million** because of caseload trends.

If we do not need as much money as anticipated for cash assistance, **we should reallocate some of that \$9 million to implement needed and carefully thought-out pilot programs** which will enable the JFES program to do its job – prepare adults in families receiving cash assistance to get meaningful work that will enable them to support their families and move from welfare to work successfully.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the \$17.7 million in the Jobs First Employment Services line of the Department of Labor budget and to supplement this funding with funds to pursue pilot programs to expand education and training opportunities for JFES participants.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.

How Connecticut Spends its TANF and MOE Funds – 1997 – 2010

Combined TANF and MOE Spending - FFY 1997 – 2010 (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	2010
Transfer to SSBG	5.9	24.1	26.7	26.7	26.7	26.2	26.7	26.7
Cash Assistance	320.6	202.0	158.4	124.4	125.7	106.8	89.2	92.5
Child Care*	75.5	115.0	96.1	38.3	12.5	32.6	27.2	34.1
Other Services					0.3	0.1	0	0
Assistance - Prior Law			6.4	1.6	2.2	2.5	2.1	1.6
Other Work Act/ Educ.; 2010 – Sub. Employ.			.4	16.8	7.7	1.1	0	16.4
GoodNewsGarage; DOL Services; Welfare to Work				1.6	1.2	0.3	0	
Employment Serv/ IPC	12.1	16.0	16.1	15.1	15.8	21.7	18.9	18.3
Transportation/Safety Net			5.1	5.3	4.8	4.0	5.6	5.5
Diversion; 2010 (ARRA)								14.9
Rental Assistance				1.8	2.3			
Energy								
Medicaid for Non-Citizens			5.0	8.3	8.6			
Pregnancy Prevention*	0	0	21.4	38.9	66.4	76.2	70.3	73.8
2-Parent Family Form.*	0	0	0	18.1	7.7	10.0	11.4	22.1
Prior Law*			13.0	15.9	15.5	18.7	20.3	14.1
Administration	37.3	37.0	37.0	21.5	28.6	34.3	37.3	30.2
Information Technology	2.5	1.0	1.7	0.8	0.7	0.9	.5	.4
Family Supp. Hsg (DCF)					0.9			
Other*	0	55.0	65.4	126.4	156.6	163.5	194.7	174.0
Total	453.9	450.1	452.7	461.5	484.2	498.9	504.2	524.6

* for more details, see attached pages.

OTHER includes:	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
Teen Pregnancy Prevention	0.7						
State "Medicaid" for Non-Citizens						12.2	15.1
Faith Based Initiatives				0.1			
Family Violence Prevention							
Outreach Services			2.1	3.8	0.5	4.2	0.9
Supportive Housing (DSS)						0.3	1.0
SDE School Readiness			32.9	44.4	54.3	65.2	67.0
SDE Adult Education		0.7	0.8	0.5		0.7	0.3
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	34.4	34.8
DCF Substance Abuse Screening	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.2
DCF Trtm't/Prev/Child Abuse	3.9	3.4	4.1	3.6	3.5	3.6	0.9
DCF Family Preservation Services	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.6	0.3
DCF Substance Abuse Services	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.1
DCF Local Systems of Care		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	
DCF Community Emergency Services		0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1		
DCF Family Violence Services		0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.3
DCF Early Childhood Development		1.8	0.4	0.2	0.4		
DCF Support for Recovering Families			2.6	4.1	0.1		
DCF Child Guidance Clinics							
DCF Family Support Teams				4.5	3.3	3.5	3.0
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	46.3	50.4
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		9.5	6.7
DCF Individualized Family Support			0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	
DMR Family Support			0.3				
DMR Respite Centers			0.3	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.8
DMR Respite Grants			0.4	0.4		0.3	0.3
Judicial Alternative Incarceration				2.3	2.0	2.4	2.3
Judicial Multi-Systemic Therapy				3.7	3.7	3.6	4.1
Judicial Court-Based Juvenile Assessments				0.7	0.8	0.4	0.4
Unspecified MOE (Other)	18.0						
TOTAL*	56.4	54.2	126.6	156.4	163.3	194.5	173.8

*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	2009	2010
PREVENTION OF OUT OF WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES includes:						
Teen Pregnancy Prevention						
Teen Pregnancy	1.0	1.1	2.1	1.8	1.1	1.2
SDE Priority School Districts	7.4	7.5	18.1	26.8	17.6	19.3
SDE Priority School Districts ESH	2.5	3.0	3.8	4.3	3.5	6.1
SDE Youth Services Bureau	2.2	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.5	4.1
SDE Transitional School Districts	0.8					
SDE Interdistrict Coop Grant	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.5	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	5.4	6.7
SDE Safe Learning Grant		0.2				
OPM LEAP	2.3	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.6
OPM Neighborhood Youth Centers	2.0	1.0		1.6	2.2	1.1
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	1.3	0.3
DCF Extended Day Treatment			3.9	6.7	6.2	6.8
DMHAS Special Population		2.7	17.1	16.7	22.5	23.0
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	1.0	1.1
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	1.3	
Judicial Community Detention Program		2.2	2.0	2.5	2.9	2.9
TOTAL	21.5	38.7	66.2	76.5	70.4	74.0

CHILD CARE includes:	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009	2010
Employment Services Child Care	2.8	10.1	0.6	0.8	4.4	4.5
Work Related Child Care	13.8					
Child Care Certificate Program	16.7	12.6	2.0	18.3	10.5	13.1
Transitional Child Care	26.9		10.0	13.6	12.3	10.5
SDE School Readiness	35.5	15.7				
Care4Kids Stimulus Checks						6.0
TOTAL	95.7	38.4	12.6	32.7	27.2	34.1
2-PARENT FAMILY FORMATION includes:						
Fatherhood Initiative		0.6	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2
DOC Education and Training		9.7	4.1	5.8	2.1	1.8
DOC Addiction Services for Non-Custodial Parents		7.5	2.8	3.5	8.6	19.9
DMHAS Problem Gambling		0.3	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2
TOTAL		18.1	7.6	10.0	11.3	22.1
PRIOR LAW includes:						
DCF Case Management Services	3.1	10.2	9.0	11.8	14.4	12.8
DCF Family Preservation	1.2	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.5	
DCF EA Foster Care & Res. Treatment	6.6	4.5	3.7	4.5	3.7	
DCF Foster Care "Non-Claimable Balance"			2.0	1.7	1.6	1.3
TOTAL	10.9	15.9	15.5	18.7	20.2	14.1