

Ct Council of Family Service Agencies  
Safety Net services Network  
Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Dept. of Social Services Budget

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Please Restore Safety Net Services

It is my honor and privilege to come before the legislature to share my experiences as a Primary Service Manager in the Safety Net program. My purpose is to relate to you how important the Safety Net program has been and continues to be in the lives of the families we serve, and to urge you not to cut funding of this basic needs program. Let me describe an example. This family was referred by the Dept. of Social Services about a year ago on February 20 2014 and their case was opened February 28. The referral was made due to the family exhausting their cash assistance. The family consists of a husband and wife and two daughters ages 15 and 9 and a son age 10. Both parents had documented medical issues and were told by their doctors they should not work. The father had been denied Social Security Disability. Father and mother were making applications for employment but without success. They wanted to work. The father last worked in 2013 but lost his job due to a restructuring of his company, Mother had worked in a factory at a temp job until that work ended a year ago. The family was at risk for eviction and homelessness. They had no family supports.

The Safety Net program and the family met and created a Family Development Plan, in which a goal of financial stability was agreed upon. Steps were collaborated upon for the family to take and for the <sup>Primary Service Manager or</sup> PSM to take to assist the family in reaching their goal of financial stability. The PSM met with the family weekly in their home to review and update this family development plan. In the plan mother and

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father agreed to making applications for employment and following up on applications made. This was done with the support of the PSM by providing on-line job listings, and any notices of job fairs, as requested by mother and father. The plan also called for mother and father to follow up on any medical appointments with the understanding continued documentation of physical limitations may lead to assistance with disability.

The Safety Net program prevented eviction by assisting with rental payments and utility bills. The PSM referred mother to a woman's work program and she was accepted. Mother earned minimum wage and gained valuable work experience. The <sup>work</sup> program ended Aug 14 for mother. Both mother and father continued to make applications for employment using the on-line job listings provided by the PSM. Father applied and was hired at a warehouse for seasonal work ~~in~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~Cheshire~~. Mother also applied and was hired with the possibility of a full time position. The goal of financial stability was being realized. Rent and utility bills were being met by the family themselves. Goals remained such as a vehicle for transportation and increased education to improve employment opportunities. The family was no longer at risk of eviction and saw the possibility of being in control. They stated to me they felt empowered. The case closed by mutual agreement on Dec 15, 2014, both parents working able to meet living expenses.

Every family is unique and every family has their

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story. This families story is just one example of many where the Safety Net program was able to make a critical difference in their lives.