

## Child Poverty and Prevention Council Meeting Summary

Friday, December 19, 2014

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Room 1C

Legislative Office Building

Hartford, Connecticut

**Members Present:** Chair Anne Foley, Stephen Anderson, Lezlye Zupkus, Kim Somaroo-Rodriguez, Peter Palermino, Patricia Kupec for Monica Rinaldi, Rod O'Connor, Paulette Barrett for Kathleen Durand, Carol Meredith, Lisa Rivers, John Frassinelli, Lindy Gold, Lisa Arends for Ram Aberasturia, Bernadette Conway, Faith VosWinkel, Karen Foley-Schain for Myra Jones-Taylor, and Elaine Zimmerman.

**Members Absent:** MaryAnn Handley, Gregg Cogswell, Renee Coleman-Mitchell, Gregory Gray, Mary Mushinsky, and Tanya Hughes.

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| Welcome                                      | The Chair, Anne Foley, convened the meeting at 10:01 a.m. The Chair stated that the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the departments of Housing (DOH) and Agriculture (Dag) were added to the Council. She introduced Stephen Anderson as the designee from the DAG and Karen Foley-Schain representing the OEC. She also noted that Kathleen Durand, designee for DOH was unable to attend today's meeting, but another staff member would join us later. Other members introduced themselves. |
| Presentations<br>TFA/TANF Redesign Workgroup | The Chair reminded the members that the Council agreed to focus its efforts on the TFA/TANF Redesign efforts. She asked Peter Palermino (DSS) and Lisa Arends (DOL) to give an update on the TFA/TANF Redesign Workgroup. Peter Palermino provided a brief overview of the workgroup and discussed the work of the   |

TFA Policies subcommittee. Highlights include:

- TFA/TANF Redesign Workgroup was established to review current policies and procedures of the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) and Connecticut's Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) programs.
- Two workgroups were established, the TFA Policies and JFES workgroups.
- The TFA Policies workgroup began its work by educating workgroup participants on current policies related to the TFA program.
- Based on a document prepared by Jane McNichol (Legal Assistance Resource Center) identifying issues and concerns with current TFA policies, review of national research, information gathered from a focus group with TFA clients and results from the TFA/TANF Best Practices forum, the workgroup developed a TFA Policies Consensus Document.
- The TFA Policies Consensus Document identifies policy areas and options to consider for recommended redesign strategies.
- Several policy areas may require significant financial investments.
- The next step is to analyze the fiscal impact and programmatic feasibility of the identified policy areas. Through this analysis, policy changes with little to no fiscal impact will be recommended.

Lisa Arends updated the members on the work of the JFES Workgroup. Highlights include:

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workgroup members reviewed recommendations of the 2011 JFES Enhancement Workgroup to assess whether the recommendations were still valid and would enhance the service delivery of the current JFES program.</li><li>• The workgroup agreed to implement three pilots recommended by the 2011 JFES Enhancement Workgroup.</li><li>• The Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) pilot program is in the second year of operations. I-BEST provides vocational skills training with adult basic education for Jobs First participants. Testing to determine skill levels of potential participants showed that a significant number of participants were at a 7<sup>th</sup> grade level.</li><li>• As part of the I-BEST pilot, the Workforce Investment Boards offer adult basic education and training programs to Jobs First participants.</li><li>• DOL is piloting a JFES Intake Enhancement program. DOL has worked with a national motivational trainer to develop and implement a new approach to the current JFES intake and orientation process. The new approach is more motivational than punitive and has had a positive effect on both the participants and staff.</li><li>• DOL is piloting the Career Occupational Preference System (COPSystem) which is a career guidance program that outlines individual's occupational interest, abilities and work values.</li></ul> |
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United Way - ALICE Report

The TFA Policies Consensus and the TANF Employment & Training Workgroup Summary will be added to the Child Poverty and Prevention Report.

Richard Porth presented information on the recently released Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) report by United Way. Highlights include:

- Connecticut's United Ways partnered with Rutgers University to provide an in-depth research study that measures financial hardships across Connecticut and the impact it has on struggling families.
- According to the study, in Connecticut, 1 in 4 households have earnings above the Federal Poverty Level but below a basic cost-of-living threshold. United Way calls this population ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.
- Household Survival Budget is a new tool to assess the financial hardship for ALICE households. Based on the Household Survival Budget, the two most prominent factors contributing to financial hardship for ALICE households are housing and child care.
- Household Survival Budget also indicates that it costs \$64,689 for a family of four to afford the essentials in Connecticut. A single adult would need a full-time job earning \$10.97 per hour and a family of four would need full-time work with an hourly wage of \$32.34 to afford the basics. In Connecticut 51% of the jobs pay less than \$20 per hour.

Two-Generational School-Readiness Plan

- Next Steps is to identify the policy recommendations and implications that United Way would like to put forward. DSS and members of the Council is interested in working with United Way on this effort.

Elaine Zimmerman updated the Council on the Two-Generational School Readiness Plan. Highlights include:

- The Commission on Children has been charged through legislation to establish a two-generational school readiness plan to promote the long-term learning and economic success for low-income families by addressing intergenerational barriers to school readiness and workforce readiness.
- A two-generational approach focuses on the needs of both the parent and the child together (not a separately).
- Head Start is an example of a two-generational approach, which integrates services for the child (early childhood education) and services for the parent. The committee is looking at how to better coordinate services for children and parents and report on results to determine the efficacy of such coordinated efforts.
- In an effort to promote the two-generational approach, Connecticut's legislative committee on children will ask each group or individual testifying before the committee two-generational questions.
- Elaine will share the progress report on the Two-Generational School Readiness Plan in January 2015.

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| <p>Child Poverty and Prevention Council Report</p> | <p>The Chair provided members with a brief overview of the draft 2014 Child Poverty and Prevention Council Progress Report. The Council reviewed the draft report. After a discussion of the report members suggested that the TFA Policies Consensus and JFES Workgroup Summary documents are added to the report.</p> <p>The Chair asked members to send Examples of Successful Interagency Collaborations to Pam Trotman by next Friday, December 26<sup>th</sup> to be included in the report.</p> <p>Members discussed the statutory sunset of the Council in June 2015. Council members noted that the legislative intent and agreement with the executive branch was for the Council to meet for ten years only, recent significant state policy and budget initiatives enacted under the Malloy administration implement many of the Council's recommendations and there are many other state collaborative entities such as the Commission on Children, the Early Childhood Cabinet, the TANF Redesign Workgroup, the ISHF Project Advisory Board, etc. that are and have been established doing similar work. Following discussion, Lindy Gold moved that the Council support the sunset provided for the Council in statute as of June 2015. The motion was seconded by Rod O'Connor and approved 14-3.</p> |
| <p>Next Steps</p>                                  | <p>The Council will meet in late spring. The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.</p>   |