

# Child Poverty and Prevention Council Meeting

*Wednesday January 11, 2012  
1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  
Legislative Office Building Room 2B  
Hartford, Connecticut*

- I. Welcome
- II. Approve Meeting Minutes of December 2011
- III. Review Revised Short-Term Priority Recommendations
- V. Children in the Recession Subcommittee Update
- VI. Next Steps
  - A. Council Progress Report
  - B. Process to Develop Long-term Recommendations
  - B. Next Meeting

## Meeting Summary

### Child Poverty and Prevention Council

Wednesday, December 14, 2011

**Members Present:** Anne Foley (Chair), Laura Amenta (CTF), Peter Palermino for Claudette Beaulieu (DSS), Cheryl Resha (SDE), Lindy Lee Gold (DECD), Kim Somaroo-Rodriguez for Brett Rayford (DCF), Renee Coleman-Mitchell (DPH), Carol Meredith (DMHAS), Gregg Cogswell (Senate Republicans), Kimball Robbins for Christine Keller (Judicial Branch) Dennis King (DOT), Mark Polzella (DOL), Rod O'Connor for Terrence Macy (DDS), Faith VosWinkel (OCA), and Elaine Zimmerman (COC).

**Members Absent:** Robert Kennedy (Board of Regents-DHE), Mary Mushinsky (House Democrats), Lile Gibbons (House Republicans), Monica Rinaldi (DOC), Brett Rayford (DCF), Robert Brothers (CHRO), Terrence Macy (DDS), and Christine Keller (Judicial Branch).

**Other Participants:** Susan Johnson (State Representative), and Pamela Trotman (OPM).

Agenda Item	Action Taken
Welcome	The meeting was convened at 1:40 p.m. by Anne Foley. Members introduced themselves.
Approve Meeting Minutes of October 2011	<p>Lindy Gold moved approval of the October 2011 meeting minutes and Peter Palermino seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote with one amendment to add Carol Meredith's (DMHAS) name to the list of new Council members.</p> <p>The Chair reviewed the Council's letter of support for the Race to the Top-ELC Application. Cheryl Resha reported that the grant award announcement may take place by the end of December.</p>
Status Agency Prevention Report	<p>Pamela Trotman provided a summary on the 2011 State Agency Prevention Report. Major points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is the sixth State Agency Prevention Report submitted to the Council.</li><li>• State agencies will continue to submit prevention</li></ul>

	<p>reports through 2014.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine state agencies are included in the report. They are: DCF, DDS, SDE, DOL, DMHAS, DPH, DSS, CSSD, and OPM. Other state agencies with representation on the Council do not provide primary prevention programs and are not included in the report.</li> <li>• State agencies reported on two or more primary prevention programs.</li> <li>• In fiscal year 2011, the nine agencies expended slightly over \$293 million dollars to administer 40 prevention programs.</li> <li>• State agency reports include information such as: program description, funding and service levels, long-term agency prevention goals, strategies, measures of effectiveness, performance based standards and outcomes and performance based vendor accountability.</li> </ul>
<p>Review of Short-Term Priority Recommendations</p>	<p>Jamey Bell from Connecticut Voices for Children, Jane McNichol from Legal Assistance Resource Center of Connecticut, and Jim Horan from Connecticut Association for Human Services presented strategies on the Council’s priority recommendations. Major points included:</p> <p>Youth Dropout Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address issues of truancy through enforcement of existing laws by requiring school districts to annually collect and report in the strategic school profiles truancy statistics and actions taken to reduce truancy.</li> <li>• Enforce the existing law requiring school districts to hold meeting with parents of truant students within 10 school days of the child obtaining truant status; refer student to community agencies for services; and file within 15 calendar days a FWSN petition for non-responsive parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Truancy is a significant problem in Connecticut. In selected school districts 20% of children missed school for 10% of the school year.</li> <li>○ Unmet educational and mental health needs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

are significant causes of truancy.

- Individuals without a high school diploma are four times more likely to be unemployed.
- Wages increase for individuals with a high school diploma or post high school education.
- Encourage the Governor to enforce existing truancy laws.

A report on school districts not in compliance with existing laws is being prepared and upon completion will be shared with the Council.

Workforce Development:

- The Departments of Social Services, Labor, and Education and the Workforce Investment Boards convened a workgroup to recommend changes to the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) Program.
- Endorse and support the changes to the JFES Program recommended by the workgroup. Workgroup recommendations (based on the understanding of the advocacy group) include:
  - Extend TFA benefits for parents successfully pursuing high school diplomas and other education and training opportunities and change the income criteria for the first two TFA extensions to allow extensions to families which are otherwise eligible and have income below the federal poverty level.
  - Make pursuing a high school diploma an acceptable work activity for JFES participants.
  - Fund programs that provide intensive GED courses and contextual learning opportunities for TFA participants.

Enhance Access to Federal Programs:

DSS should:

- Increase enrollment for federal energy and

	<p>nutrition assistance programs administratively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit recommendations from community advocates and social service providers on strategies to increase access to federal programs.</li> <li>• Streamline and simplify the application forms to improve efficiency of the application process. Hire additional staff to implement this recommendation.</li> <li>• Create a committee with community advocates and social service providers to develop recommendations that will decrease the length of time to implement modernization efforts.</li> <li>• Create an integrated service delivery system to allow clients to access information and services through DSS or contractors.</li> <li>• Improve communication between DSS central and regional offices to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented uniformly throughout the state.</li> <li>• Expedite SNAP benefits for emergency cases.</li> </ul> <p>The chair asked Council members to review and send comments on the recommendations presented by the advocacy group. The recommendations will be revised to reflect comments made by Council members and distributed prior to the January meeting.</p>
<p>State Agency Update on Homelessness Prevention Programs</p>	<p>The Departments of Children and Families, Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services and Public Health provided an update on their programs and services provided to homeless children and youth.</p> <p>DCF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive Housing for Families provides subsidized housing and intensive case management services to DCF families for whom inadequate housing jeopardizes the safety, permanency and well being of their children. To date, a total of 542 families, which includes 1,261 children have been served though the program.</li> <li>• Supportive Housing for Young Adults receives funds from existing resources to pilot this program</li> </ul>

for youth aging out of foster care. The program serves to prevent or end homelessness for young adults struggling to maintain safe and stable housing. The program will serve 36 young adults for one year.

Education:

- McKinney -Vento provides grants to 12 LEAs to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth.
- During the 2010-2011 school year, Connecticut school districts reported 2,942 homeless students, an increase of 8.3% over the prior year and a 23.3% increase over the past two years.
- McKinney-Vento funded LEAs experienced:
  - an increase of 2.5% in the number of “unaccompanied youth” served
  - a decrease of 14.6% in the number of homeless students identified as IDEA eligible
  - a decrease of 5.9% in the number of homeless students identified with Limited English Proficiency
- SDE also provided a summary on preliminary data on homelessness included in the Consolidated State Performance Report on the McKinney-Vento Program.

DMHAS:

- Supportive Housing Program provides housing based case management services to the heads of households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program ensures that all children are enrolled in school and referrals are made to appropriate treatment services to meet the needs of the children.
- The “PILOTS” program provides supportive housing services similar to the Supportive Housing Program and serves 75 homeless families through various community agencies.
- The Next Step Program provides the same services as the PILOTS program. There are 76 units of supportive housing for homeless families.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter Plus Care provides 175 units for homeless families through rental subsidies and DMHAS matches services through the existing Local Mental Health Authority system.</li> </ul> <p>DPH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIDS/HIV Prevention Program funds three Street Smart programs that target runaway and homeless youth ages 11-18. It is a multi-session, skills-building program designed to help youth practice safer sexual behaviors and reduce substance abuse.</li> <li>• Tobacco Use Prevention – addresses all risks associated with the use of tobacco products. Data is not tracked or reported by homelessness.</li> <li>• Women, Infant and Children serves pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infant and children up to five years of age. Data is not tracked or reported by homelessness.</li> <li>• Community Health Centers –seven health centers receive federal funding to provide health services to the homeless population.</li> <li>• School Based Health Center (SBHC) – 71 sites and 10 expanded school health services sites provide comprehensive primary health care to students in grades Pre-K -12 and are not tracked or reported by homelessness.</li> </ul>
<p>Children in Recession Subcommittee Update</p>	<p>Elaine Zimmerman and Faith VosWinkel provided an update on the Children in Recession subcommittee. Elaine Zimmerman reported that the Liberty Bank Foundation, Cronin and Company and the Workforce Investment Boards are working with the Children in the Recession Task Force to assist in the development and implementation of a fund to assist families facing a short-crisis. Funds will be available to eligible residents to assist with finding and retaining employment and bridging employment support services.</p> <p>The subcommittee made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a think tank to help the Council gain more knowledge and understanding of specific issues relating to child poverty.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include strategies to mitigate the impact of the recession on children as identified in Section 1 (c) of Public Act 10-133 as an on-going Council agenda item for the year.</li> <li>• Hold cross agency training at least once or twice a year and report information to the Council.</li> <li>• Convene meetings with state agencies (listed in the Public Act 10-133), Children in the Recession Task Force members and the Child Poverty and Prevention Council subcommittee to discuss specific tasks assigned to state agencies as outlined in the public act and require the Commissioners of these state agencies to provide a status report to the full Council.</li> <li>• Consider a statutory change which will require Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut Association for Human Services and Connecticut Legal Assistance Resource Center to become members of the Council.</li> <li>• Hold Child Poverty and Prevention Council meetings more frequently.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair reminded the subcommittee of the significant amount of work required of the state agencies to meet various legislative and other mandates. Several state agencies lost a considerable number of staff and yet must continue to meet these mandates. The chair asked the subcommittee to engage the state agencies that volunteered to participate on the Children in Recession subcommittee and revise recommendations based on these concerns.</p>
<p>Next Steps</p> <p>a) Council Progress Report 2011</p> <p>b) Process to Develop Long-Term Recommendations</p> <p>c) Next Meeting</p>	<p>The chair asked members to provide examples of successful interagency collaboration. These examples will be highlighted in the 2011 Council Progress Report. The chair also asked members to provide comments on the short-term recommendations presented by the advocacy group.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Child Poverty and Prevention Council will be on Wednesday, January 11 at 1:30 p.m.</p>

Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

DRAFT