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# CABHN FEVER

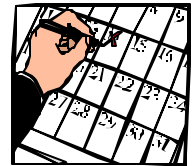
## Keep Your Utilities On 13 More Weeks of Unemployment Benefits Available

Are you worried about a utility shut off this spring? Are you facing utility payments that you can't afford? Statewide Legal Services (SLS) may be able to help you. Once again SLS is offering a *Utility Day* where legal services advocates will try to come up with a workable payment agreement for both you and the utility company. The Utility Day held in New Haven was a real success for clients with utility companies offering their best deals.

There's still time to take advantage of *Utility Day*: **Saturday, April 6**, from **10am-2pm** at the Bridgeport Department of Social Services, 752 East Main St, Bridgeport. **Bring utility bills, proof of income and rent receipts.** *Questions?* Call SLS at 1-800-453-3320. ♦

If you have run out of Unemployment Compensation (UC) benefits, here's some good news. You may be able to get an extra 13 weeks of unemployment benefits.

**Who can get extended benefits?** If you filed for UC after March 15, 2001, are still unemployed, and do not have any more UC benefits left, you may be able to get extended benefits. To find out, call the CT Department of Labor. Hartford area: 860-263-6890. Bridgeport: 203-330-4830. Hamden: 203-789-6582 or look in the blue pages of the phone book. Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320 can also help figure out if you can collect.



The Department of Labor is going to try to contact by mail all workers who may be able to get these extra benefits. But, you don't have to wait to be contacted.

**NOTE:** Some people who received a small weekly benefit, with a large part of that being the dependency allowance, may not be eligible for the extension. ♦

## Summer Camp Time Coming Soon

Have you heard about Camp CONNRI? Summer Camp registration has started for children and seniors. This camping experience gives everyone an opportunity to enjoy fun activities, meet others and experience the adventurous outdoors. Registration sites are: The Community Services Department, 945 New Britain Ave, West Hartford (860)953-0641 x13; The Salvation Army Senior Center, 120 Sigourney St, Hartford (860) 246-3251 and North End Community & Worship Center, 100 Nelson St., Hartford (860)543-8419. ♦

## Health Care Coverage Available

HUSKY coverage is available to children in families of all income levels. Many families are not aware that, depending on their income, parents and relatives who take care of children can also get coverage. A "relative caregiver" is a grandmother, aunt, uncle or other relative who lives with a child and is responsible for the care of that child.

Call 1-877-CT HUSKY (1-877-284-8759) to learn more or to apply. ♦


## New WIC Site Opening

A new WIC site has opened to offer information and help registering for the WIC program. WIC is a federal program that provides supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education, and health care referrals for women, infants and children. The WIC site will be located at the Salvation Army North End Community & Worship Center, 100 Nelson St, Hartford. For more information, call (860) 543-8419. ♦

## Free Booster Car Seats

*Boost America*--a free booster seat giveaway program--is coming. Sponsored by United Way of the Capital Area and other businesses, this giveaway will take place on Sunday, **April 14**, 11am-2pm, 30 Laurel St., Hartford.

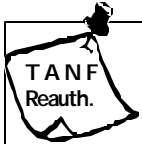
The booster seats are for children who are between 40-80 pounds and 42-57 inches tall. The child who needs the car seat and the vehicle must be brought on April 14 for installation. The vehicle must have lap and shoulder belts. If you cannot get to Hartford or can't make it on April 14, call **Infoline** at 211 for referral to another source in the state. ♦



- Apply for Energy Assistance
- Get \$\$ back from the IRS with the Earned Income Tax Credit.

## Client Representatives Needed

Statewide Legal Services is looking for two client representatives on its Board of Directors. Individuals must live in a household with income below 125% of the Federal Poverty Level. Client Board members are especially important in helping to establish program priorities and to ensure the program responds to client concerns and needs. The Board meets four to six evenings per year in Middletown. Reimbursement for transportation and child care is available. For more information, please call Norman Janes or Sara Ramos at 1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380. ♦



### President Bush Proposes TANF Changes to Increase Work Requirements

On February 26, President Bush announced his proposals for the federal welfare program, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). The federal TANF bill must be reauthorized by October 1, 2002, and is expected to be the subject of debate in the House this spring and the Senate this summer. In order to receive federal TANF block grant funds, states must demonstrate that a certain percent of families receiving assistance are participating in work activities. Among other changes, the **President proposes to increase the number of families** who must engage in work activities **and the number of hours** that families must work in order for states to meet these work participation requirements.

#### Under the Bush proposal,

- to fully count toward meeting a state participation rate, family members would have to be engaged in work activities for 40 hours per week (up from the 30-35 hours per week under current law). The first 24 hours of work activities would be limited to unsubsidized or subsidized employment, on the job training, supervised work experience or supervised community service, or for up to three consecutive months only, substance abuse treatment, rehabilitative services and work-related training. States could define a broader set of work activities for the rest of the 40-hour week.

- by 2007, 70% of families receiving assistance would have to be engaged in work activities. (Currently, 50% of single parent families must be engaged in work activities and states receive a "case load reduction credit" which reduces this requirement significantly.)

Despite the increased work requirements, *there is no increase in funding for child care or subsidized employment proposed.*

These proposals have moved the TANF reauthorization debate away from discussions of increasing the availability of education and training back to how strict work requirements should be. It is important to educate members of Congress on the importance of education and training for parents moving from welfare to work and to explain that these increased work requirements will be very difficult for Connecticut to meet. *Call Debbie at CABHN for more.* ♦

### Summary Evaluation of Jobs First Program

The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) recently issued the final report on its evaluation of the Jobs First program. This study followed about 5,000 welfare recipients for four years and compared the experiences of Jobs First participants with those of a control group of families who continued to receive assistance under the old AFDC rules. The study was done before Connecticut implemented new, stricter time limits on October 1, 2001.

#### Key Findings:

- ✓ Participants in the Jobs First program were more likely to leave welfare for work than those in the control group. But the differences between the groups were modest: By the end of the four years studied, 19% of the Jobs First participants were receiving cash assistance, while 28% of the control group were doing so.

- ✓ Jobs First group members earned, cumulatively over the four years studied, an average of about \$1,800 (7%) more than their AFDC group. During the same period, the Jobs First group had about \$2,400 (6%) more total income when income from earnings, cash assistance and food stamps were combined, compared with the AFDC group. This moderate increase in employment and income was experienced in a time of economic growth. One of the main reasons for the increased income of Jobs First participants was the high earned income disregard in Jobs First.

- ✓ Jobs First's effect on income changed over time: Once Jobs First participants reached the time limits and lost the ability to combine cash assistance and earned income, the two groups' average income from earnings, cash assistance and Food Stamps was almost identical, although more of the Jobs First group than of the AFDC group were working and not on welfare.

- ✓ Even with increased income, Jobs First group members were shown to be more vulnerable to housing problems.

*(Continued ... see MDRC p. 3)*

### Directory of Community Services Available

Free for the taking: Infoline's latest (2 years old) Directories of Community Services--available. If you can't pick them up, we need to charge for shipping. Call Carol Davis (860-571-7526). ♦

### Alternatives to Budget Cuts Info on Web

CT Voices has posted a series of fact sheets and reports that offer alternatives to budget cutting proposed by the present administration. The information is free and available for downloading and redistribution. Go to [www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org) and click on "Alternatives to Budget Cuts Materials" on the left column. ♦

### Working Together... we can find a better way!

We hope CABHN Fever has helped you stay informed. Join CABHN today for \$30\* and receive a copy of **Mapping Change**, the latest summary of changes affecting low-income people.

**Yes, let's work together!**

*Send your donation today!*

Make check payable to CABHN and send to 80 Jefferson St., Hartford, CT 06106

\*plus \$3 shipping/handling  
Donations are not tax-deductable.



## Legislative Session In Full Swing

It's a short session this year and things are moving fast. Committees are wrapping up their work. Here's a list of the key issues of interest that are still active at the legislature. By the time this newsletter is mailed, the Appropriations and Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committees will have acted on the bills that are listed as currently in those Committees. **Note:** Often the concepts in bills live on even if the bill does not get out of the Appropriations or Finance Committees.

### Temporary Family Assistance

■ **SB 434** opens Safety Net to families who lose benefits at 60 months or at end of 3<sup>d</sup> extension; in Appropriations Committee.

■ **SB 443** opens T-RAP (Transitory Rental Assistance Program) to families leaving benefits at time limits; awaiting action in the Senate.

■ **HB 5640** suspends time limits for families during period of rising or high unemployment and expands training and education opportunities for TFA recipients; in Appropriations Committee.

### SAGA Medical & Cuts to HUSKY A

■ **HB 5023** (which contained the Governor's budget proposals) was not passed by Human Services Committee - **but the proposals will live on.** The proposals were to end coverage for:

- eye care,
- home health care,
- medical equipment (including rented wheelchairs), and
- services not provided by a physician for people receiving medical care through SAGA, and
- impose health insurance premium and co-pays for parents in families earning 100%-150% of the federal poverty level.

### State-funded Benefits for Legal Immigrants

■ **SB 444** requires that new applicants who are legal immigrants continue to be accepted into all state-funded programs (TFA, SAGA cash & medical, home care, food stamps) after June 30, 2002; in Appropriations Committee.

### Food Stamps

■ **HB 5556** extends food stamps for three months for families leaving TFA cash assistance and permits Food Stamp participants to own a car worth up to \$9,500 (instead of the current \$4,650).

TFA recipients who receive food stamps already are permitted to own a car worth \$9,500; this bill would make the rules the same for all food stamp participants; in Appropriations Committee.

### Earned Income Tax Credit

■ **SB 498** creates a refundable tax credit on the state personal income tax for low-income working families; in Finance, Revenue, & Bonding Comm.

### Education and Training

■ **SB 322** provides a work study program for TANF recipients; in Appropriations.

■ **HB 5481** provides expanded education and training opportunities for TFA recipients; in Appropriations.

### Unemployment Compensation

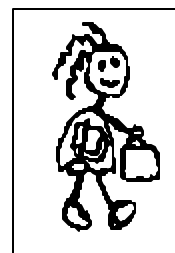
■ **SB 121** adopts alternate base period calculation so that individuals with a short work history (i.e., former welfare recipients) can qualify for UC benefits; awaiting action in the Senate.

■ **HB 5578** makes UC benefits available to otherwise qualified applicants who are only available for part-time work; awaiting action in the House.

*For more information or to get involved, please call Debbie at CABHN (860-278-5688 x 12).* ♦

## Cuts Threaten Children & Covenant to Care

Imagine you're five years old. Your parents have been fighting and you're scared. A strange woman is taking you away from your home to stay with someone you have never met. The woman tries to help you feel better by comforting you. Then she gives you a bag that has night clothes, a toothbrush, toothpaste and a new book all your own or maybe a stuffed toy. Something you can hold on to in a very stressful situation.



This bag prepared especially for you has come from an organization named Covenant to Care.

Now, imagine that bag isn't there.

There is no toy to call your own. That is what will happen if Covenant To Care's \$218,000 grant is eliminated from the 2002-2003 budget as proposed by Governor Rowland. For this grant, nearly 30,000 Connecticut children and their families receive an estimated \$1.3M in services which provide relief, assist DCF reunify families and help keep down the numbers of children in foster care.

**PLEASE...call your legislators!** Ask them to put Covenant to Care back in the budget. ♦

### MDRC Report (con't from p. 2)

By the third year, 35.5% of the Jobs First participants were unable to pay their full rent or mortgage, compared to 31.2% of the control group. Nearly 10% (3.5% more than in the control group) had moved in with friends or family. 2.6% of the Jobs First group, but only 1.5% of the control group, reported having been homeless in the past year.

✓ Jobs First had no consistent effect on a wide range of indicators of material well-being. Levels of hardship remained high for families in both groups.

*The report is "Connecticut's Welfare Reform Increased Work and Reduced Long-Term Welfare Receipt" and can be found on the web: [www.mdrc.org](http://www.mdrc.org).* ♦

Call Your Legislator

House Democrats	1-800-842-1902
House Republicans	1-800-842-1423
Senate Democrats	1-800-842-1420
Senate Republicans	1-800-842-1421
Governor's Office	1-800-406-1527

## **Substance Use and Dependence among Welfare Recipients**



A new working paper, finds that substance dependence and use are **less** a problem among welfare recipients than the general public assumes. The paper, "Substance Use Among Welfare Recipients: Trends and Policy Responses," by the Joint Center for Poverty Research, finds that in the 1998 TANF caseload, about 20% *used* drugs or alcohol and that many fewer *were dependent on* drugs or alcohol. Although it is true that drug use is greater among welfare recipients than among the general population, the prevalence of drug use declined during the 1990s among welfare recipients and nonrecipients alike. For more, visit [www.jcpr.org](http://www.jcpr.org). ♦

## **Free Family Entertainment**

Covenant to Care and the Children's Trust Fund invite you to hear Dr. Bavolek speak about nurturing your children and see the dance and dramatic performance of CityKids. This is not a boring lecture. Dr. Bavolek and the CityKids drama group have created a show that will entertain, make you think, and educate everyone present. There is some strong language so adults are encouraged to only bring older children. A light meal will be provided. The schedule is:

- April 11, University of Hartford;
- May 1, Stamford Center for the Arts
- May 21, Mattatuck Museum;
- May 22, Long Wharf Theater.

All events are from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. For information & tickets (you must reserve tickets), call 860-677-5057. ♦

## **Save the Date: April 12<sup>th</sup>**

CT NOW 14th Annual Feminist Awards Dinner on Friday April 12, from 6-9 p.m., to be held at the Omni Hotel in New Haven Those being honored: Judy Blei, Anne Stanback, Geena Clonan, Michelle Dorman, Jennifer Jaff, and Jackie Majors-Myles. RSVP by calling 524-5978. Tickets are \$50; scholarships are available. ♦

## **CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)**

80 Jefferson Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

### Upcoming CABHN Meeting

**Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>**

**10 - Noon**

**Community Renewal Team (CRT)**

**555 Windsor Ave., Hartford**  
(on the 2nd floor)

#### **Topics:**

Legislative & Budget Update  
TANF Reauthorization Update  
& more

*The Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs (CABHN) is a statewide network of individuals, community groups and organizations which supports and promotes advocacy on low-income issues. For more information, please call (860) 278-5688.*