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CABHN FEVER

Rides for Northeast Corner Residents

If you live in the Windham/Danielson/Putnam region of CT and need transportation to work or a work related activity, you should know about Rides for Jobs. The Windham Regional Community Council (WRCC) provides the round trip van ride, mileage reimbursement for the driver, and help to get a vehicle on the road or a driver licensed or registered.


DSS has set the eligibility criteria, which are intended to help families get off or stay off cash assistance. Those who are eligible include:

- the parent of a minor child who lives with him or her, or
- the non-custodial parent of a minor child (*who signs a release for contact information for the DSS Child Support Division*), or
- a woman who is pregnant, or
- a person under 18 living in an income eligible family.

Single adults are not eligible unless they meet one of the above criteria.

Individuals who want to be referred for these services should contact a social service provider within this region. Providers who want to be able to refer their clients, or who need updated brochures and information, should contact Marcia Heath at 423-4534 or e-mail: marcia.heath@snet.net. Transit services are funded by the Dept. of Social Services and administered by the Northeast and Southeast Workforce Investment Boards. ♦

Coming Next Month:

Just in time for completing your tax return....we'll have information to help save you money or even put money back in your pocket. ♦ 

Many Families Lose Cash Assistance

On October 1st, new TFA rules strictly limit how long families can receive cash assistance took effect. As a result, **539 families**, with probably **more than 1,500 children**, **have lost cash assistance**. The number of families affected each month is shown below:



Month & Year	Cases closed because of reaching 60-month limit	Cases closed because of reaching 3-extension limit
October 2001	241	0
November 2001	69	61
December 2001	51	117
January 2002 (anticipated)	67	128
Total	428	306

If you're alarmed or concerned by these numbers...it's time to get involved. Please call Debbie at CABHN at 860-278-5688 x 12 if you are affected by these changes or want to do something to change these public policies. Sharing your story can make a difference to the legislators who make policies. ♦


People on Probation Can Now Vote

Starting January 1, 2002, individuals who are on probation who have been convicted of a felony are able to vote! Join us on January 9, 4:30 p.m. at the State Capitol as we celebrate this important step in ensuring full participation in the Democratic process. You'll learn about the new law and why it's so very important to register and to vote. *Call DemocracyWorks at 860-727-1157 for more information.* ♦

A Look at Your Legal Rights: Pregnancy and Work

It is illegal for an employer to fire, harass, or discriminate against a woman because of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition. Employers must treat pregnancy as they would a disability in terms of employment rights. And, it is not up to the employer to decide when a pregnant woman must stop work. For free advice & information about your legal rights, call Statewide Legal Services 1-800-453-3320. ♦

Your Right to A Ride to Medical Appointments

Medicaid clients around Connecticut are having trouble getting the needed medical transportation. In fact, an elderly woman was forced into a nursing home because the transportation agency, without warning, stopped taking her to her dialysis appointments. 

If you're on Medicaid and have had trouble getting transportation to or from your doctor's appointments, please contact Priya Cloutier at CT Legal Services, 1-800-413-7798 or by email: pcloutier@connlegalservices.org. ♦

Medicaid Clients Have Trouble Getting Medical Transportation

Are you (or do you know someone) who is on Medicaid and having trouble getting medical transportation? Everyone on Medicaid has a right to help in getting to and from medical appointments. The Department of Social Services or the HMO must tell Medicaid clients how to get medical transportation. The transportation must be appropriate—meaning that someone who has a lot of difficulty using public transportation (for example, a bus) must be provided with transportation they can use (for example, a taxi). Yet, Medicaid clients throughout Connecticut are having problems getting this transportation.

When Medicaid patients miss appointments, regardless of the reason, they lose more than simply that day’s medical treatment. They also risk the loss of their medical providers. Providers call these missed appointments as “no shows”. These “no shows” cost the provider money and are often cited by providers as a reason for not participating in the Medicaid program.

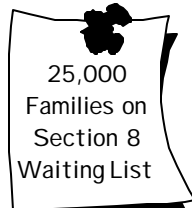
After months of negotiations with DSS and one of the two transportation agencies, Connecticut Legal Services and New Haven Legal Assistance Association are considering litigation to force improvements in the Medicaid transportation system to resolve the following kinds of problems:

- Having to make appointments 48 hours in advance, even when the need for care is immediate, and being denied transportation services if the request is made less than 48 hours in advance.
- Being denied taxi service because the doctor didn’t “update” the required medical certification
- Changing of doctor’s appointments by the transportation company calling the doctor’s office if the request is not made 48 hours before an appointment.
- Denying transportation to out of town doctors because the transportation broker claims the doctors are too far away and there must be a closer doctor.

More Than 25,000 Households Apply for DSS Section 8 and RAP Waiting Lists

Based on preliminary information, it appears that the Department of Social Services (DSS) has received more than 25,000 applications from households seeking to be placed on the statewide Section 8 and RAP waiting lists. The volume of applications reflects the enormous need for housing assistance in Connecticut.

The Department had opened the lists for a ten-day period only — from November 25 to December 5. About 35,000 applications were received in that period, although it is expected that the number will be reduced when duplicate applications are eliminated. This was the first time that the state list had been opened in about two years. All earlier state lists have been canceled.



The sequence of names on the Section 8 waiting list will be determined by a lottery, which should occur in January. The first 12,000 names drawn in the lottery will be placed on the list; the remainder will be dropped. Although drawn from the same applications, the RAP waiting list will be established separately.

Unless the RAP regulations are changed, the RAP list, which will be limited to 7,000 names, will be based upon the order in which applications were received. It is hoped that the state will begin offering vouchers and certificates to people at the top of the two lists no later than the end of January.

It is important not to confuse the DSS Section 8 list with separate waiting lists maintained by housing authorities, which receive their own Section 8 allocation directly from the federal government. Individual housing authorities periodically open the waiting lists for their own Section 8 programs, and some of those waiting lists have been opened recently. The state DSS list, in contrast, is based upon a separate voucher allocation which DSS receives from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The state list is administered by D’Amelia Associates of Waterbury, which in turn uses housing authorities to handle client contact. Some housing authorities thus administer both their own Section 8 vouchers and DSS Section 8 vouchers. The new waiting list applies only to the DSS Section 8 vouchers. It applies to all RAP certificates.❖

Help Workers Boost Their Paychecks!

Come and learn more about the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit and how it can help low to moderate income families struggling to make ends meet. Attend one of these two free workshops:



January 23 at CRT in Hartford, and **January 24** at ABCD in Bridgeport.

Topics include: the Federal EITC, the “new” Refundable Child Tax Credit, Individual Development Accounts, and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Sites. Many people going into the workforce for the first time may not know how their family could benefit from these credits and programs. Registration is needed. *Contact Debbie at CABHN at 860-278-5688 ext 12.❖*



Issues for the 2002 Legislative Session

The 2002 Legislative Session will be short (February 6 - May 8) and money will be tight. Most observers do not expect that major new initiatives will be adopted. The list below are some of the proposals for basic assistance to Connecticut residents which CABHN members will be supporting in the coming session.

Temporary Family Assistance

- Open the Safety Net to families who lose benefits at 60 months or at the end of the third extension.
- Create an extension category so that families who are unemployed during a recession but have reached the time limits can get cash assistance.
- Stop the clock for families receiving cash assistance during a recession.
- Disregard income from Unemployment Compensation for purposes of calculating TFA benefits (in the same way that earned income is disregarded).

SAGA Medical & Cash Assistance

- Reinstate non-emergency medical transportation as a provided service.

Immigrant Benefits

- Require that new applicants be accepted in state-funded food stamp, health care, cash assistance and home care programs after June 30, 2002.

T-RAP

- Open T-RAP (*Transitional Rental Assistance*) to families who lose benefits at 60 months or at end of the third extension.

Unemployment Insurance Recovery Package

- Adopt alternate base period calculation for determining financial eligibility of Unemployment Compensation applicants.
- Make Unemployment Compensation available to otherwise qualified applicants who are only available for part-time work.
- Increase benefits, through increasing base benefits or dependents' allowance.

Security Deposit Guarantee Program

- Expand eligibility for the Security Deposit Guarantee Program to include, at the least, persons with Section 8 vouchers or RAP (Rental Assistance Program) certificates.

Rental Voucher Success Program

Proposals of the Partnership for Strong Communities include:

- Maintain funding for all authorized RAP certificates (2,151)
- Fund programs to:
 - help persons with rental assistance find housing;
 - expand testing and enforcement regarding housing discrimination (especially source of income discrimination); and
 - expand Beyond Shelter Program and provide new RAP certificates for this program.

Health Insurance for the Uninsured

- Expand eligibility for HUSKY medical assistance and support other programs to extend medical coverage.

Food

- Increase funding for State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SSNAP).
- Continue funding for the Connecticut Food Policy Council.

For more information on these issues, call Debbie Noble at CABHN, 860-278-5688 x 12. ♦



Spirit of Giving Felt in the Northeast Corner

Many thanks to the loving efforts of 50 employees from the DOT Putnam Maintenance & Repair and the DOT Pomfret Maintenance for donating food to those in need. These generous people filled a 9-ton dump truck with food items to be distributed by The Access Agency in Willimantic. ♦

Higher Income Limits Makes Prescription Assistance Available to More Seniors



Starting in 2002, ConnPACE, the Connecticut prescription drug assistance program, will be available to you. To qualify, you must:

- either receive Social Security disability payments **or** be 65 years of age or older

AND

- meet the income limits of:
 - \$1,667 per month (\$20,000/year) or less for a single person; or
 - \$2,258 per month (\$27,100/year) or less for a couple.

It's that simple! If you qualify, you will only have to pay \$12 for each prescription and a \$25 per year registration fee.

AARP Connecticut and others worked hard to get this new benefit for you and older and disabled citizens across the state. We hope you will apply and tell others about the program. For more information or a ConnPACE application form, call: 1-800-423-5026. ♦

New DOL Program for Those Losing Benefits

The Department of Labor has initiated a new program to provide assistance to adults in some of the families who lose cash assistance because the family has reached the 60-month limit on assistance. The program, called *Work Opportunities*, is available the greater Hartford and the greater New Haven areas. It will help families look for jobs, keep jobs, increase wages and find a new job quickly if a job is lost. This program is only available to members of families who have lost benefits because their family reached the 60-month limit and who live in the greater Hartford or New Haven areas.

For information, call Julie Redding in the Hartford DOL office (860-566-3456) or Thomas Avallone in the Hamden DOL office (203-789-7764). ♦

TANF Reauthorization Panel Discussion & Public Hearing



Please join us on January 17 in room 2E of the Legislative Office Building as national and local welfare policy experts discuss TANF reauthorization. An informative panel discussion from 9:30 - 11:30 will be followed by a press conference at 1:30 am to highlight the TANF Reauthorization Briefing papers compiled by Connecticut policy advocates. Then, at 1:00 pm, a public hearing will be held to give welfare recipients, municipal leaders, policy advocates, and the executive branch of state government a chance to share their views. *For more information, call Debbie at CABHN 860-278-5688 x 12.* ♦

Advocacy & Media Training Offered

The Partnership for Strong Communities invites you to a training designed for people who are impacted by housing issues or professionals working in housing-related fields. It will be held January 16, 9:30 - 12:30 in Stamford. The training will address effective communication with elected officials and the media. A legislator will be on hand. *Call Shelby at 860-247-4322 to reserve your spot.* ♦

CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)

80 Jefferson Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Agency Awarded Contract for Inspections

The Access Agency of Willimantic has been awarded the contract to provide housing code inspections for the town of Windham. First Selectman Mike Paulhus said there was a need for an outside agency to handle the housing inspections because the current housing inspector was only part-time.

The Access Agency is well qualified to do these inspections as it has already conducted over 700 annual home inspections. Bilingual home inspectors are available to help Spanish-speaking tenants.

The Access Agency can be reached at 860-450-7400. ♦

Upcoming CABHN Meetings:

Friday, January 11th
10 - Noon

Willimantic Housing Authority
49 West Ave., Willimantic

Topics:
Update on Section 8
Legislative Agenda

Friday, February 8th
10 - Noon

Community Renewal Team (CRT)
555 Windsor St., Hartford

Topics:
Governor's Budget
Legislative Action

In case of bad weather, listen to WTIC
AM 1080 for cancellation information.

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.