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CABHN FEVER

It's Time to Apply for Energy Assistance!



Wondering how you'll pay your heating bills this winter? **Apply for energy assistance beginning November 1.** Applications can take up to 45 days to process, but immediate fuel delivery should be available if needed. Deadline to apply is April 30, 2003 (*earlier if funds run out*). Here are some key points:

- You may be eligible for benefits even if heat is included in your rent payment** (*if rent is more than 30% of household income*).
- Apply if your income is less than the amounts listed below:**

# in house	1	2	3	4	5	6
Annual income	\$13,290	\$17,910	\$22,530	\$27,150	\$31,770	\$36,390
Monthly income	\$1,108	\$1,493	\$1,878	\$2,263	\$2,648	\$3,033
- If someone in the household is at least 60 years or disabled, apply if your income is less than the amounts listed below:**

# in house	1	2	3	4	5	6
Annual income	\$17,720	\$23,880	\$30,040	\$36,200	\$42,360	\$48,520
Monthly income	\$1,477	\$1,990	\$2,503	\$3,017	\$3,530	\$4,043
- Contact your local Community Action Agency or call INFOLINE (211) or the DSS Energy Line at 1-800-842-1132 for information on the closest application site.** *Bring proof of income for everyone in the household and a copy of your fuel or utility bill.*
- Contact your utility company about its arrearage forgiveness program** if you owe the company money. This is a payment program that forgives back bills based on the amount of payments the household makes and the amount of energy assistance received.
- Repairs or replacements of unsafe furnaces or furnaces that are not working** are available to some households.
- More weatherization assistance** (making your home energy efficient) **is available.** Landlord's permission is needed. When you apply for energy assistance, ask for weatherization help or contact your electric company to apply. NU/CL&P customers contact INFOLINE at 211. UI customers call 1-800-722-5584, ignore the instructions and stay on the line. When a representative answers ask for "UI Helps Weatherization Assistance".

Important: If you are on state welfare (TFA), think about what you can really afford when you make a payment agreement. Your income may drop if you are at the end of your 21-month time limit or the end of an extension, and it may be hard to pay what you agreed upon. **Call Statewide Legal Services for free advice 1-800-453-3320 or (860) 344-0380.**

Community Action Agencies:

- Bridgeport:** Action for Bridgeport Comm. Development, 384-6904
- Bristol:** Bristol Community Org. 582-7490
- Danbury:** Community Action Committee of Danbury, 748-5422
- Derby:** TEAM, 736-5420
- Hartford:** Community Renewal Team, 560-5800
- Meriden:** Community Action Agency of Meriden, 235-0278

- New Britain:** Human Resources Agency, 223-2288
- New Haven:** Community Action Agency of NH, 397-5223
- Norwich:** Thames Valley Council for Comm. Action, 889-1365
- South Norwalk:** Norwalk Economic Opportunity, 899-2444
- Stamford:** CTE, 352-4846
- Waterbury:** New Opportunities for Waterbury, 756-8151
- Willimantic:** Access Agency, 450-7400. ♦



Be Aware of These Changes!

Benefits for households which heat with electricity or gas ("utilities") have been reduced. Last year, these households could get slightly higher benefits to make up for the fact that they are ineligible for the crisis assistance available to households heating with deliverable fuels (oil, propane, wood, coal). This year, those higher benefits have been eliminated.

Benefit levels for lower income households will be the same as last year (except for the reduction mentioned above) but because state funding for benefits has been eliminated (federal funding is still available), it is more likely that the state will run out of funds before the program closes.

The Contingency Heating Assistance Program (CHAP) may not be available this year. CHAP income limits are higher than those in other programs but the state is not currently providing assistance through this program. If federal funding is received, the state may open this program later. To check on this program, call 1-800-842-1132.

Individuals or families who receive assistance from the state (TFA, AABD or State Supplement, SAGA or GA, or Food Stamps) who live with others who do not receive assistance may not be eligible for energy assistance this year. In the past, these low-income individuals could "carry" some energy assistance benefits with them when they doubled up. ♦

According to the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research (NCSDR), children need at least nine hours of sleep each night for their health, safety, and best performance in school and other activities. Lack of sleep can lead to attention difficulties, easy frustration, and difficulty controlling emotions.



Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Allocation Plan Results of Public Hearing

On September 4, the Appropriations and Human Services Committees of the Legislature held a public hearing on the SSBG (Social Services Block Grant) Allocation Plan submitted by DSS. The Committees have the power to approve or modify the plan but not to reject the plan. If the Committees take no action, the plan is approved as submitted.

The Committees faced difficult decisions because the available block grant funding had declined by about 11% - from \$24,696,586 in 2002 to \$21,948,476 for the coming year. There were two areas of funding in which very significant cuts, in both dollar and percentage amounts, were proposed. In the DSS plan, the Employment Services line, funded at \$446,382, was eliminated and the Legal Services line was cut by \$482,000 or about 50%. The Committees made changes in both these proposals.

Funding for Legal Services:

As a result of testimony at the public hearing and advocacy before that hearing, \$350,000 in funding for Legal Services was restored (about \$482,000 was cut in the proposal sent to the Committees by the administration). The money was drawn from other important lines in the SSBG spending plan: Case Management (\$110,000), Residential Treatment (\$140,000) and Home-Based Services (\$100,000).

Funding for Employment and Recreational Services:

Under the SSBG plan as originally proposed to the Committees, about 15 non-profit agencies or towns lost funding for education, employment or recreation services. The legislative committees voted to restore some funding for employment programs (\$40,000 for CAUSA; \$31,000 for the New London OIC program; \$16,000 for the Spanish Speaking Center) and some for recreation programs (\$35,000 for recreation programs in Bridgeport) but other programs still face elimination of their SSBG funding.

The \$122,000 needed to restore funding to these four programs was taken from the line supporting special services for persons with disabilities.

The impact of the cuts in the Case Management, Residential Treatment, Home-Based Services and Special Services for Persons with Disabilities is not yet clear. But this process demonstrates how important it is for social service providers to work together and to be part of setting priorities for state spending as the next state budget is put together. It also illustrates the importance of looking for ways to increase revenues. Otherwise, needed services will continue to face disastrous cuts. ❖

Domestic Violence Booklet Available

“Welfare Made A Difference: ESCAPING VIOLENCE, FINDING SAFETY” is back from the printer just in time for Domestic Violence Awareness Month, October 2002!!

This booklet illustrates through moving personal accounts how important access to welfare has been to many women in their escape from domestic violence. If you would like copies of the booklet please email Liz Accles at accles@yahoo.com or Deborah Noble at dnoble@LARCC.org with your name, mailing address and the quantity of booklets requested. Please pass the word to other organizations, teachers, professors, legislators, journalists and domestic violence organizations that you think may have an interest in receiving copies.

For more information about *Welfare Made A Difference*, please go to the website www.wmadcampaign.org or call 860-278-5688x.12.



What’s New with the Food Stamp Program in Connecticut?

The passage of the Food Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2002 brings significant changes to the Food Stamp Program, the most notable being restoration of federal food stamp benefits to most legal immigrants. A variety of mandatory changes including a standard deduction based on family size which increases with inflation, quality control reforms and raising the asset limit for disabled families to \$3,000 are upcoming in October 2002. The federal government also grants states flexibility in administering the Food Stamp Program by allowing for options that states may implement at their discretion.

A recent report by End Hunger CT! entitled “Preliminary Analysis of the Food Stamp Program in CT” provides an in-depth analysis of the recent mandatory and optional changes and how it will affect Connecticut.

E-mail Sally Mancini at smancini@endhungerct.org or call (860) 296-1127 for the full report.❖



Check out these Helpful Websites

To help determine if you qualify for some federal benefits programs, including health programs like Medicare, Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) go to <http://www.GovBenefits.gov>

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: This website gives access to a database of all Federal programs available to State and local governments, domestic public, quasi public, and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; specialized groups and individuals: <http://www.cfda.gov/>❖

Information on the Care 4 Kids Program

This summer CT received \$13.3 million from the federal government in TANF Performance Bonus money. Of that \$13.3 million, \$4 million was allocated to *Care 4 Kids* child care assistance program, for a two year period.

DSS plans to use those funds to serve the approximately 300 families on the *Care 4 Kids* wait list. This is a list of individuals who have applied for child care assistance, but were placed on a wait list due to budget cuts from last year. When the legislature closed the program to new applicants July 1st, it estimated savings of \$13.2 million per year. The \$2 million added per year for the next 2 years is only a small fraction of what is actually needed to keep the program open.



While DSS processes applications from the 300 families on the wait list, it has started a new wait list as of August 17, 2002.

DSS plans to spend all of the \$4 million in bonus funds on new eligible families (the 300 families from the July 1st wait list) and will process applications from the more recent wait list if more funds become available.

For more information please contact Donna Osuch at CAHS, 951-2212x. 229 ❖

Do you have something someone else may need? From furniture to food, your gifts can help others! Contact the United Way of CT at 860-571-7500 or email to unitedwayservices@ctunitedway.org

Rents Out of Reach in Connecticut



“Out of Reach,” a report prepared by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, concludes that for many families, full-time work does not provide enough income to afford a typical apartment. Our state’s two-bedroom “housing wage,” the amount a worker must earn to afford a modest two-bedroom unit, rose 8.7% in the past two years, from \$15.67 an hour in 2000 to \$17.03 an hour today.

According to the Connecticut Housing Coalition, this year’s report finds severe housing cost problems across the state, ranking Connecticut the sixth most expensive state in the country. The Stamford-Norwalk metropolitan area remains the third most costly rental market in the entire nation. The report is based upon federal “fair market rent” data and employs the generally accepted standard for housing affordability—that a household pay no more than 30% of its gross income for housing costs.

Among the report’s other findings:

A Connecticut household needs to earn \$35,419 to put a family into a two-bedroom apartment.

A single parent in Connecticut making only the minimum wage of \$6.70 an hour would have to work 102 hours a week, or the equivalent two-and-a-half full-time jobs, in order to afford a place to live with two bedrooms.

In Lower Fairfield County, you need an annual income of at least \$57,440 to afford a two-bedroom apartment. If you earned minimum wage there, you would need to work 173 hours a week—almost 25 hours a day, seven days a week - to afford a two-bedroom rental!

The full Out of Reach report may be accessed on the web at www.nlihc.org

The web version offers a comparison with last year’s data and a closer look at the Connecticut housing market. ❖

CABHN Thanks You!

CABHN extends a very special thanks to each organization and individual who helped us to celebrate our 10th Anniversary by their generous support.

Nancy Hronek

CT Women’s Education & Legal Fund (CWEALF)

TEAM, Inc.

*Connecticut Conference United Church of Christ
Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
End Hunger CT!*

*Collaborative Center for Justice
In-The-Making, Inc.*

*New Haven Legal Assistance Assoc.
St. Lukes Lifeworks*

*Village for Children & Families
Foodshare, Inc.*

*Office of Urban Affairs
Interfaith Cooperative Ministries*

*Greater Hartford Legal Aid
Connecticut Legal Services
DemocracyWorks*

*United Way of Connecticut
Connecticut Food Bank, Inc.*

*Laurel House, Inc.
Statewide Legal Services*

*Stephanie Labanowski
Rep. Anthony Tercyak*

*Rep. Andrea Stillman
Mary Lou Sanders*

*Bobbi Shorthouse
Carolyn Gabel*

Leslie Brett

*Connecticut Association for
Community Action*

*Sen. Martin Looney
Jane McNichol*

*Urban Semester Program
University of Connecticut*

Christian Community Action’s LifeWorks Center Presents:

Healthy Mind, Body and Spirit

Sat. Oct. 19, 2002

Conte West Hills Magnet School, 511 Chapel St., New Haven

8-3:30PM

Exhibits & vendors on vitamin therapy, nutrition, and holistic healing.

Registration of \$25 includes parking, lunch, and childcare.

For more information contact: CCA Lifeworks Center at 203-777-6072

Fax: 203-777-6039 or email: cca@ccahelping.org

*A program of The Christian Community Action, Inc., in partnership with
The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven
and New Haven Healthy Start*



SLS to Sponsor Poverty Law Seminars

Statewide Legal Services of CT, Inc, will hold two seminars on Poverty Law for social service agencies. The goal of the workshops will be to explain how the Connecticut legal aid programs work, and how employees of social service agencies can better serve their clients by understanding the legal issues their clients are facing.

The topics to be covered at each seminar are Landlord/Tenant Law, Consumer Law, Family Law, and Entitlements.

The first seminar will be held at CRT, 555 Windsor St. in Hartford, CT on Friday, November 1, 2002 from 9-1 and the next seminar will be held in the New Haven area, with the date and time to be announced shortly. There is no fee, but registration is required and seating is limited. To request a registration form please call 1-800-453-3320 ext. 3034❖

**Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT and
CABHN (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)**
80 Jefferson Street
Hartford, CT 06106

2002 CT Housing Conference

Join the Connecticut Housing Coalition and others for Connecticut's largest gathering of affordable housing practitioners and activists. "HOMEWARD BOUND" is the 2002 Annual Conference of the Connecticut Housing Coalition. The conference will be held on Tuesday, October 22, at the Cromwell Radisson Hotel, from 8:15-5PM.

There is a registration fee of \$60 for Coalition members and members of cosponsoring organizations and \$75 fee for Nonmembers, both of which include lunch.

Scholarships are available for low-income individuals and students. Please call 860/563-2943 for more information or e-mail info@ct-housing.org❖

AARP Voter Guides On-Line

The AARP has Voter Guides for the Governor and the 5th and 2nd Congressional Districts available on line at <http://www.aarp.org>

**CABHN Meetings
held 2nd Friday of the month**

10 - Noon

Friday, October 11th

Lifeworks Center
85 Willow St, Bldg. 52
New Haven (Exit 6 off of 91S)

Featuring:

Guest Speaker: Patricia Wallace from The Office of Urban Affairs of the Archdiocese of Hartford and the CenterEdge Project will be presenting.

*Friday, November 8th
meeting at CRT*

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.

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