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# CABHN FEVER

## Child Nutrition Programs At Risk

The House and Senate both are expected to mark up Child Nutrition Re-authorization bills in October 2003. Now is a crucial time to contact your members of Congress with the message to do no damage to the Child Nutrition Programs.

There are indications that the Child Nutrition Re-authorization bills will include a substantial increase to the number of families who have to provide more paperwork so they can prove how little their families earn so that their children can receive free or reduced-price school lunch.

*continued...see page 4 "Child"*

## Your Family's Money/ El Dinero de su Familia

This easy-to-understand publication is full of advice on how to manage money, and is a great tool for helping your family. This new publication is available through the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS). Best of all, it's free! The helpful financial tool is written in both English and Spanish.

For a copy, contact Claudia at (860) 951-2212 or go to: [www.caHS.org](http://www.caHS.org).

## Statewide Legal Services Extends Office Hours

If you are low income and think you have a legal problem, please call us for free advice and information. Our client phone lines are now open:

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
9-4	9-7	9-3	9-7	9-3



Call 344-0380 in the Middletown and Hartford exchanges. Our toll-free number is 1-800-453-3320. Se habla español.

## Good News on Food Stamps Work Requirement Changed ...you can collect Food Stamps for longer

Starting October 1, new food stamp rules will affect people who are "able-bodied adults without dependents" (ABAWD). **The change is to excuse (exempt) you from the work requirement.** With the old rules, you had to work or take part in an "approved activity" for 20 hours a week to keep getting food stamps. **The new rules excuse or exempt you from the work requirement which means the time limit is gone.** (The time limit was 3 months out of a 36-month period).

*So, if you are considered an "ABAWD":* If your benefits have already ended, just reapply. If your food stamps will end on September 30, you will keep getting them. And those who apply for food stamps after October 1 will not have a food stamp time limit.

For more information or help in getting food stamps, please call End Hunger CT! at 860-560-2100.

## Make A Difference!

Hartford Vote 2003 is looking for volunteers to help with voter registration efforts for these upcoming events:

*September 27:* African-American Day Parade. 10:00 a.m. *October 4:* Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride Rally. 8am-4pm. *To Volunteer:* Call Democracy Works at (860) 727-1157.



**Feel the Power**  
Register and  
**VOTE**

It only takes a few minutes and it can make a difference!

## Cost of Housing in CT Out of Reach

"The National Low Income Housing Coalition" recently released their report "Out of Reach", a study of housing cost across the country and the wages needed to afford housing. Based on the federal "fair market rent", the study uses the generally accepted standard for housing affordability- that a household pay no more than 30% of its income for housing cost. Some of the findings reported are:

- ◆ To afford a 2-bedroom apartment in CT, a person would have to earn \$18.00 an hour.
- ◆ CT average rents increased by 5.7% in the past year.
- ◆ A person earning minimum wage of \$6.90 per hour would have to work 104 hours a week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.
- ◆ CT is the 6<sup>th</sup> most expensive state for renters.

For more information contact the CT Housing Coalition at 860-563-2943. For a copy of the report, go the National Low Income Housing Coalition website [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

## Leadership Institute Training Starts Soon

CCA LifeWorks Center is offering an 8-week training course for individuals who want to become leaders in their community. The "Leadership Institute" offers such workshops as: Time Management, Computer Basics, and more. This free program is open to the public. Workshops will be on Tuesday and Thursday from 6 - 8 pm, beginning September 30th. Childcare and transportation are available.

For more information Cherie Ann Mazzoni at 203-777-6072 ext. 404 or Kim Turner at ext. 406.

## Many Legal Immigrants Remain Eligible for HUSKY

Recent changes to the HUSKY Program may have an impact on the eligibility of legal immigrants. But for most immigrants, their HUSKY benefits will stay in place, such as the following.

### Benefits stay in place for:

- ✓ Immigrants who are already enrolled in HUSKY.
- ✓ Qualified legal immigrants who have been in the United States for more than five years are eligible for federally funded benefits.
- ✓ Immigrants whose applications were received before July 1 may still be granted coverage if they are otherwise eligible.

**Immigrants who have been in the U.S. less than five years will not be eligible. However, there are important exceptions to this rule. Under federal requirements, Connecticut must continue to provide HUSKY A (Medicaid) coverage to these groups of immigrants:**

- ✓ Refugees and asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and immigrants whose deportation has been withheld are eligible for their first 7 years in the U.S.
- ✓ Amerasian immigrants are eligible for the first five years in the U.S.
- ✓ Honorably discharged U.S. military, active duty military personnel and their spouses, and unmarried dependent children (regardless of date of entry) are eligible.

**Also, under federal requirements, Connecticut must continue to provide HUSKY B (SCHIP) coverage to these immigrants, even if they have been in the U.S. less than five years:**

- ✓ Refugees, asylees, and certain Cuban, Haitian, and Amerasian immigrants to the same extent that they are eligible for Medicaid (see above).
- ✓ Unmarried, dependent children of honorably discharged veterans and active duty service members of the Armed Forces, regardless of the date of entry.
- ✓ Battered children or children of battered spouses under certain circumstances.

**For questions or help with filing appeals, immigrant families should call the HUSKY Infoline at 1-877-CTHUSKY or Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-233-7619.**

*Much of this guidance on benefits for immigrants was adapted from "Immigrant Access to Health Benefits: A Resource Manual" at [www.accessproject.org](http://www.accessproject.org)*



## TANF Re-Authorization Update

On September 10, Senator Grassley's PRIDE Act came out of Senate Finance Committee. *One important change is that while the Superwaiver Proposal is in the PRIDE Act, it was narrowed to include only TANF, CCDF and SSBG.*

*Other items to be concerned about include:*

- Inadequate Child Care Funding, only \$1 billion over 5 years;
- No new state flexibility to help low-income immigrants;
- Work requirements are too restrictive;
- Funds being spent on untried Marriage-Promotion Programs.

*Several amendments to the PRIDE Act were accepted by the chairman:*

- The Caregiving for Disabled Family Members Amendment, the only Democratic amendment to be accepted.
- Sen. Olympia Snowe's *Parents as Scholars* which is identical to last year's amendment.
- Sen. James Jefford's Low Income Car Ownership Program (based on the Good News Garage program).

However there is a very "bad" amendment that, while it is not in the PRIDE Act right now, the Chairman promises will be worked on before the bill comes to the floor. This bill is Sen. Santorum's Felony Drug Ban (*a.k.a. the Lifetime Welfare Ban*).

The full bill will be available soon online at [www.thomas.loc.gov](http://www.thomas.loc.gov).

For more information, contact Deborah Noble at 860-278-5688 x 12 or by e-mail at [dnoble@larcc.org](mailto:dnoble@larcc.org).

## Help Wanted: Program Assistant

A part-time program assistant is wanted at Covenant to Care, a non-profit agency serving abused children. Responsibilities: communications and coordination support, outreach and meeting support and more. Great attention to detail needed, Must have proficient computer skills, especially in Microsoft Office. Flexible 20 hours week. Send/fax resume & cover letter to 860-243-0100, CTC-Search, 120 Mountain Avenue, Suite 212, Bloomfield, CT 06002. EEO/AA. ♦

## Save the Date: Oct. 24 Housing Conference

*Housing for our Future*, the CT Housing Coalition's annual conference is being held at the Mystic Marriot in Groton on October 24 from 8 am - 5 pm. The keynote speaker will be Andrew Cuomo, former HUD Secretary. Workshops will include Housing News From Capitol Hill, One State or 169 Towns?, and others.



Lunch & afternoon reception are included. Cost is \$75 for CT Housing Coalition members and \$90 for non-members. Payment and registrations are due by October 15. For more information or to register, please contact the CT Housing Coalition at 860-563-2943 or [keoshia@ct-housing.org](mailto:keoshia@ct-housing.org).



## Key Provisions In Budget Implementer Bills

SB 2001 (JSS PA 03-03) and HB 2051 passed August and September, 2003

### SAGA (State Administered General Assistance program)

■ **Town general assistance programs are eliminated.** Only Norwich has been running a municipal general assistance program.

■ **Cash assistance** is reduced - from \$350 a month to \$200 a month for “unemployable” recipients and from \$150 a month to \$50 a month for “transitional” individuals who don’t have to pay for shelter. Families will receive \$50 less than the TFA benefit for a family of the same size.

■ **SAGA Medical** services will be delivered through federally qualified (community) health centers or other primary care providers with whom the Commissioner of DSS contracts. Hospital services will also be provided to SAGA medical recipients. Pharmacy services are to be provided through the health centers. Co-pays of \$1.50 will be charged. (Unclear when these changes will be implemented.)

### Safety Net Program

■ Funded at \$1.5 million a year. No changes were made to the Safety Net statute but it is unclear how this funding will be used by DSS to deliver services.

### HUSKY A (except for the co-pays for adults, a federal waiver is required before implementation of these changes)

■ **Benefits** for people in HUSKY A managed care programs will be **less comprehensive.**

■ **Monthly premiums** to be imposed: \$10 per person not to exceed \$25 per month for recipients with incomes between 50% and 100% of the federal poverty level; \$20 per person not to exceed \$50 per month for recipients with incomes between 100% and 185% of the federal poverty level

■ **Co-pays:** \$3 for medical services (office visits) and \$1.50 for prescriptions. Pharmacies can deny prescriptions to people who do not pay co-pays over six month period. Psychotropic drugs are exempt from this provision.

### HUSKY B (serves children only)

■ **Services and premiums and co-pays** for children in HUSKY B are to be “substantially similar” to the largest commercially HMO package in the state. Premiums and co-pays may increase; limited to 5% of gross income.

■ **Premiums imposed on children in families with incomes between 185% and 235%** of the federal poverty level (Band 1).

### Legal Immigrants

■ State-funded cash assistance, health care and food stamp programs for recent immigrants remain **closed to new applicants.** Current recipients of assistance will continue to be covered.

### Expanded Rescission Power for the Governor

■ In the second year of the budget, the Governor is given expanded authority to rescind (cut) spending, unless the state receives unanticipated money from the federal government. The Governor always has the authority to cut up to 5% of any line item if the state is facing a deficit up to a total of 3% of the General Fund. Under this new provision, **the Governor can cut up to \$55 million additional dollars** unless the state receives \$55 million in unanticipated federal funding. (If the state gets less than \$55 million in unanticipated federal money, the Governor’s additional rescission power is reduced by the amount of federal funds that the state receives.)

For more information, call Debbie at CABHN 860-278-5688 x 12.❖

*Note: The legislature is going into a special session on October 15. Immigrant benefits and SAGA may be brought up in this session. Call your legislators!*

## Budget Highlights - Housing



### CT Housing Finance

**Authority** – The budget just passed takes \$2.5 million from CHFA reserves in each year of the biennium, for a total \$5 million cut. This is much better than the \$80 million recommended by the Governor.

**Housing Tax Credits** – The Housing Tax Credit Contribution Program and the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit were preserved in the final budget, despite the fact that the Governor’s budget recommended their elimination.

**Shelter Funding** – The Housing/Homeless Services line item in the budget included an additional \$550,000; there was no clarifying language; however, it is assumed that the money was added for emergency shelters in order to maintain their current capacity.

**SAGA** – The budget cuts to SAGA payments to about 5,000 people in the state who are unable to work; many of these people are waiting to receive their Social Security Disability eligibility (which can take two years). This cut will put more people at risk of homelessness and create an increasing strain on overburdened homeless shelters. (*See related article on the left*).

If you would like to receive *Housing Policy Briefs*, a biweekly update of affordable housing & solutions to homelessness, contact Shelby Mertes at 860-247-4322 or by e-mail [shelby@ctpartnershipshousing.com](mailto:shelby@ctpartnershipshousing.com). ❖

## The State of Working CT 2003 Report Available

Connecticut is mired in a “job losing” recovery, having lost almost six times as many jobs during the current so-called economic recovery than in its 2001 recession — 35,600 jobs lost in the “recovery” compared to 6,300 jobs in the “recession.” This and other details about how the economy is affecting working families is detailed in CT Voices for Children’s annual report, *The State of Working Connecticut, 2003*. The full report, is available at [www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org) ❖

## Child Nutrition Programs

(continued from p. 1)

A U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) study suggests that as many as 1 in 5 children who are certified as eligible for free school lunch may be ineligible because the family's income may be too high, yet poverty data experts have found this estimate to be unreliable.

While the USDA study does not actually prove there is an over certification problem, recent USDA data suggest that increasing the percentage of families who have to document their income....

a) Will NOT help improve the accuracy of certifications in the program, and

b) Will harm schools and children by deterring thousands of eligible low-income children from the school lunch program.

For more information and talking points, go to [www.frac.org/html/federal\\_food\\_programs/cnreauthor/overcertalkingpoints.htm](http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/cnreauthor/overcertalkingpoints.htm) ❖

## INFOLine on the Web

Most people know to call INFOLine at 2-1-1 to get much needed information about programs throughout Connecticut. But did you know that you can get this information by going on the web to [www.211infoline.org](http://www.211infoline.org) ? This site contains the same links to much of the same information used by INFOLine's helpful and professional staff. You can find out about Child Care, health care, just to name a few. So when you need to find help, INFOLine telephone services at 2-1-1 and [www.211infoline.org](http://www.211infoline.org) are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ❖



## Correction to Last Issue

The telephone number for the South Western CT Area Agency on Aging is (203) 333-9288. The number for the South Central CT Area Agency on Aging is (203) 785-8533. Thank you reader!

## CABHN Meetings held 1st Friday of the month

9:30 am - 11:30 am

**Next Meeting:  
October 3rd**

Community Renewal Team  
(CRT)

555 Windsor St., Hartford

*Topics:*

Budget Update

TANF Reauthorization

And 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.*

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

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