

Hi. My name is Kaiya Andrews. I'm 26 years old and live in Waterbury Center with my partner and two children – a 3 year old and a 2 year old. We are one of the families who lost Reach Up benefits because of my disability. I want to know why this is happening. I don't understand it. We are already behind on our rent and our utilities and I don't want to become homeless. I grew up in state custody and moved from place to place when I was young. I don't want that for my children.

I have eye problems that are leaving me blind. I am also losing my hearing and need a hearing aid to be able to hear. For years I've struggled as a person with PTSD, anxiety, and on the autism spectrum. That is why I receive SSI and SSDI. My partner and our kids receive Reach Up grants. But, even together it's not enough to make rent, pay the utilities, and keep our family fed. My partner was injured on the job and so he can't work anymore. We're hoping that worker's comp will help, but then we might lose some or all of our other benefits until that runs out. After that we'll be back to square one again and if he can't work we'll be needing assistance again.

Our rent is \$1,300 per month for a two bedroom apartment, plus we pay the electric bills. We don't get any subsidy on the rent and we're falling behind. I'm worried we will lose our housing. My disability checks together are about \$730 and our Reach Up grant is \$600, so you can see that leaves us with only \$30 plus our food stamps to get by on.

I am a good mom and make sure my kids are fed, bathed, and clothed. And, with help from my partner we have a safe, stable environment for the kids. But, everything is different when you have a disability and it makes it much harder when there is not enough to provide for my children. Our family is not the only one in this situation. I hope you will consider putting this money back so we can take care of our children.