



Reach Up Legislative Initiatives



Testimony to Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
Erin Oalican, Reach Up Director
March 22, 2018

Reach Up Programs

∞ Reach Up

Vermont's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program
Work Requirement

∞ Reach First

Short-term (less than 4 months)
Not likely to need Reach Up after 4 months – most go back to employment

∞ Reach Ahead

Transitional Benefits – transitions family off Reach Up program when participant becomes employed
Support services – childcare subsidy, help maintaining job, \$ for work supplies, car repairs, etc.

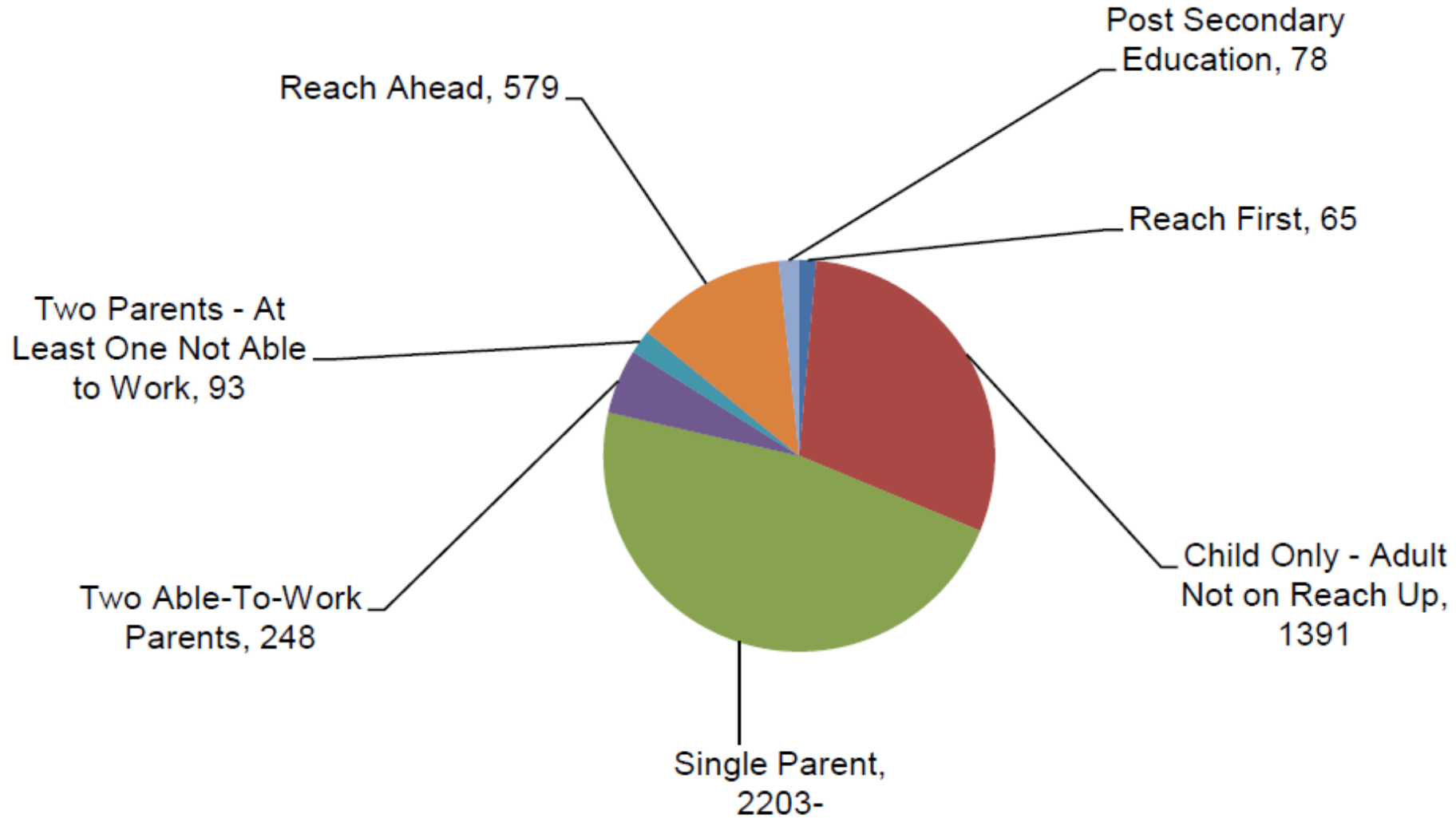
∞ Post-Secondary Education Program

Financial assistance
Participant pursues 2 or 4 year degree

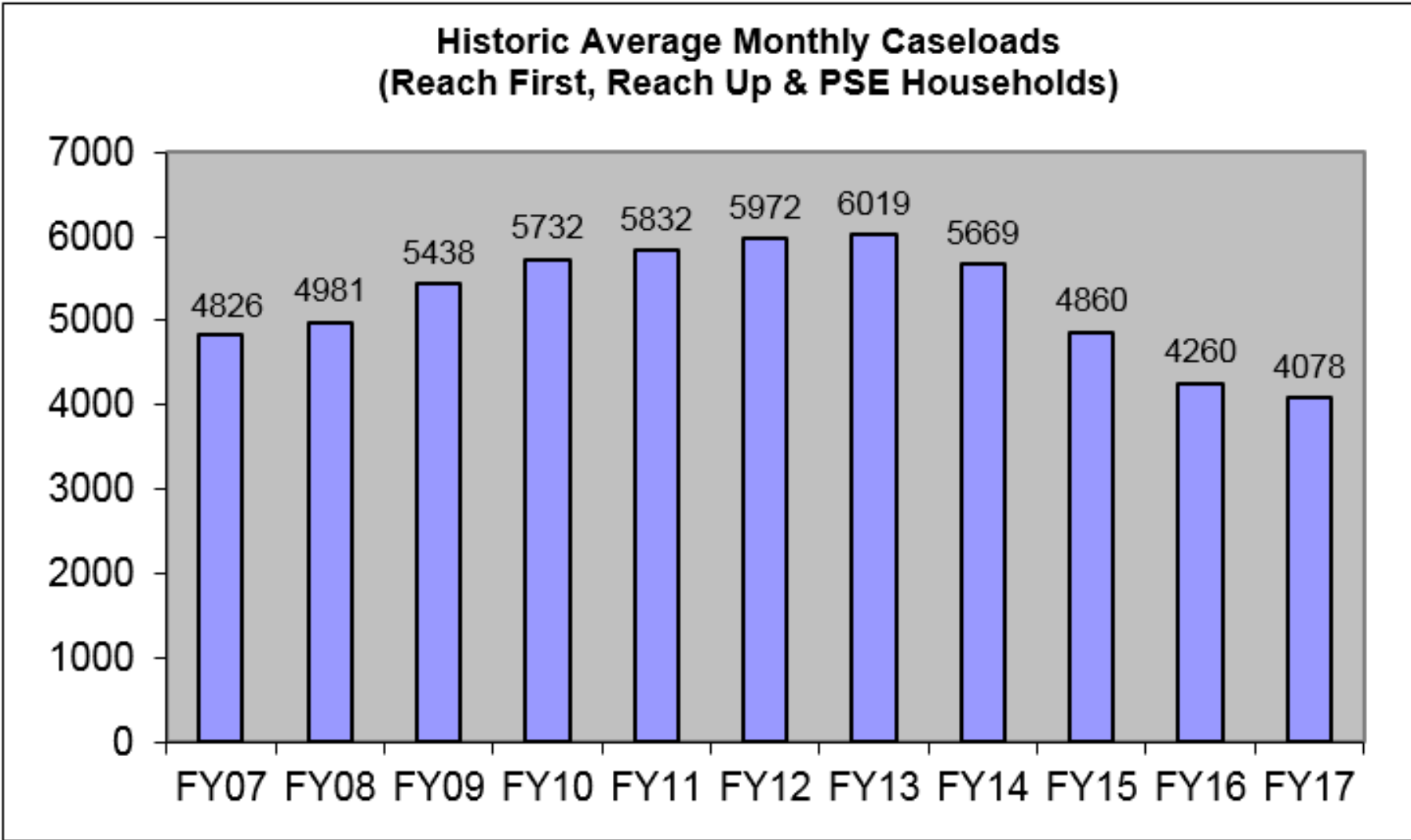
∞ Child-Only Reach Up

Only the children receive assistance
No participation requirements for adults – adults are either non-parent caregivers or receiving SSI

Types of Families in the Reach Up Caseload (including Reach First, Post Secondary Education, and Reach Ahead)



Caseload Decline – Participants are becoming employed



Using Behavioral Science to reduce poverty

∞ Economics

∞ Psychology

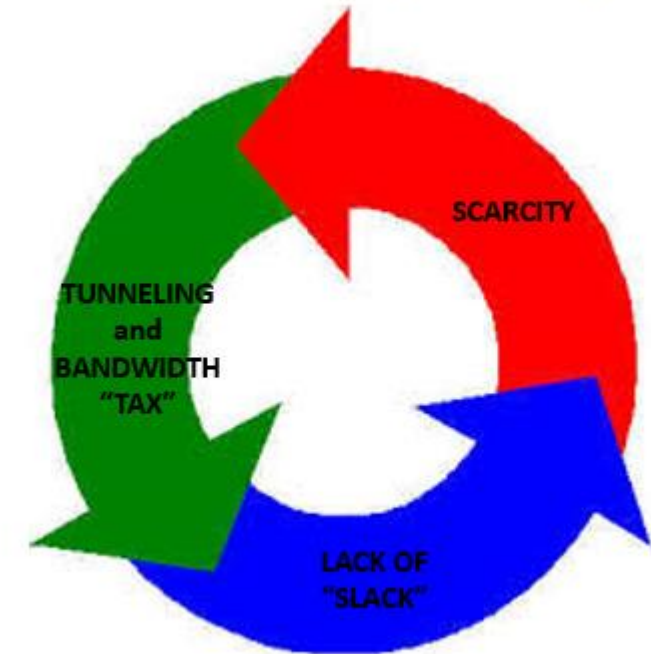
∞ Neuroscience



Bandwidth – circuit overload



The Scarcity "Trap"

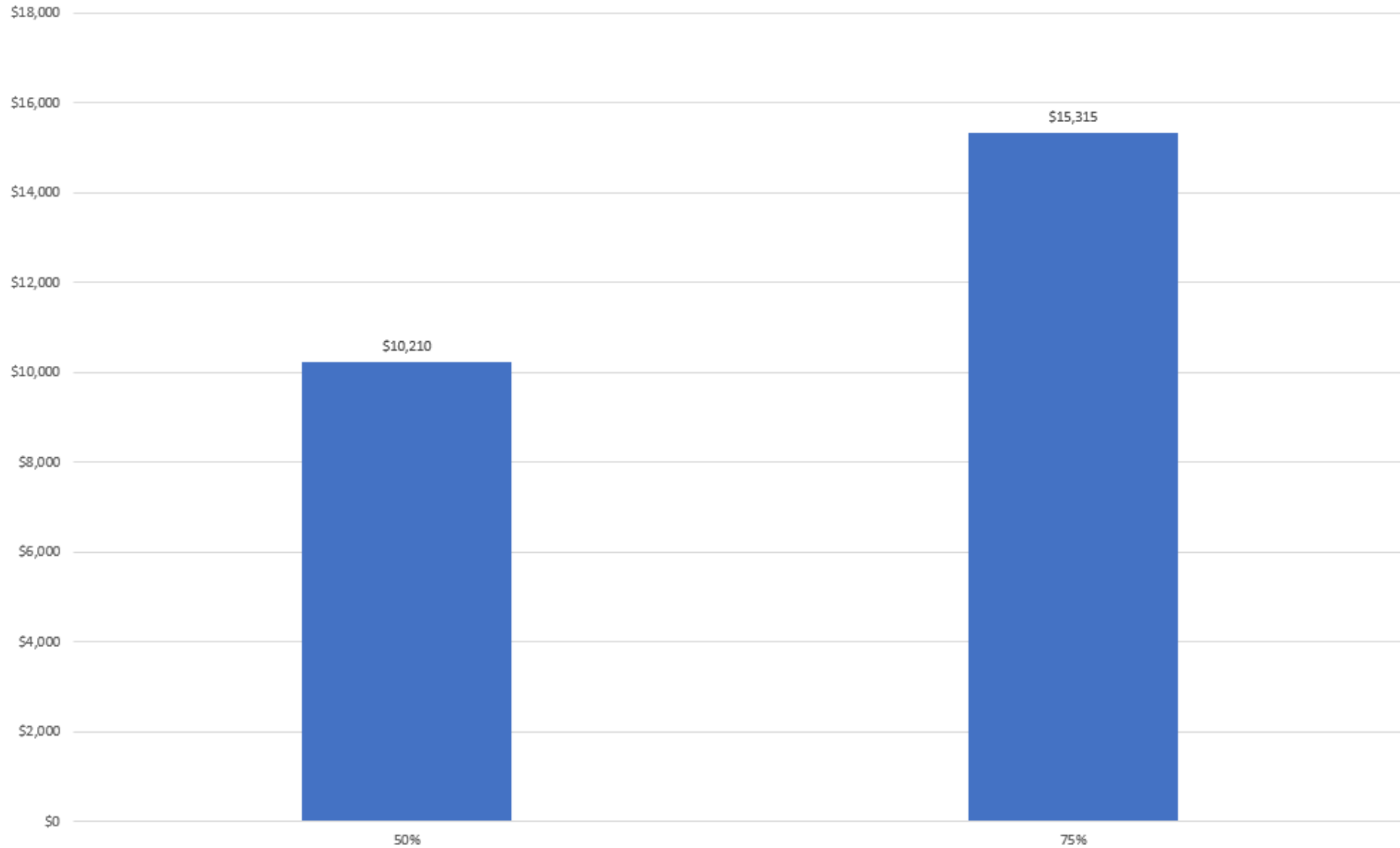


Reach Up Grant for Family of Three

Approximately 27% of Reach Up families live in public or subsidized housing

	2008	2018
Basic Needs Standard (Family of 3 from 2004)	891	891
Housing Allowance (Standard from 2001)	450	450
Special Needs Housing Allowance (if housing costs exceed standard)	90	90
Ratable Reduction	X 49.6%	X 49.6%
Reach Up Grant Amount	\$709	\$709
HUD Fair Market Rent in Chittenden County (family's actual housing costs, for rent alone)	\$1013	\$1395

Reach Up
Maximum Gross **Yearly** Income / FPL
Household of 3



WHAT can
we do?

“... The burden of change rests primarily with the individuals and organizations who have the power to design programs and systems in ways that take universal human tendencies into account.”

- *Cut the costs*
- *Create slack*
- *Reframe and empower*

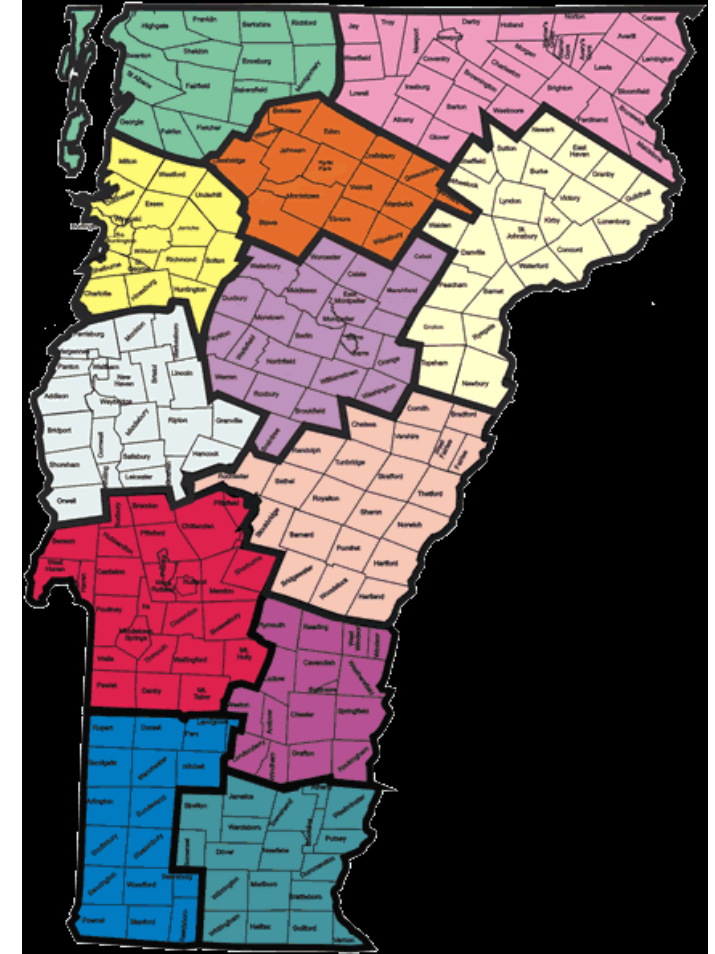


Rural Vermont Transportation demographics

2200 of the 2800 Vermont families receiving Reach Up (including Case management services) live **outside major transportation hubs**

“Major” transportation hubs –

Burlington, South Burlington, Essex, Montpelier, Barre Town, Barre City, Rutland Town, Rutland City



Motor Vehicles as a resource

- ☞ Reduces administrative burden*
- ☞ Reduces stress when family can get to where they need to go*
- ☞ Transportation buffer, less likely transportation will be a barrier*

33 VSA § 1103 (c) (7): refers to the equity value of motor vehicles for exemptions in eligibility determination

Current case management and review practices

CASE MANAGERS

- Meet with participants a minimum of once per month, often as much as once per week
- Conduct home visits
- Continually assess, and review the Family Development Plan as needed
- Ensure that family is on track to meet goals, or goals are modified appropriately

SUPERVISORS

- Provide weekly or biweekly supervision (depending on size of district and needs of case manager)
- Conduct 6 Supervisory Case Reviews once per month, checking for completed Family Development Plans, progress of family, deferments etc.

CENTRAL OFFICE

- Conduct detailed case reviews for every case manager at least once a year
- Develop targeted training as needed
- Provide assistance “trouble shooting” and help supervisors find solutions for families when needed

18/36 Month case management reviews

- ☞ Reduces administrative burden*
- ☞ Creates Slack*
- ☞ Gives staff more time to work intensively with families*

33 VSA § 1107(a)(2): refers to mandatory case reviews and what this entails

Work Requirements

- ☞ *Significantly reduce administrative burden*
- ☞ *Participants spend less time trying to understand program rules, and more time working on their goals*

Creates Slack

- ☞ *Parents can share the WR – if one parent can't do as much, the other can take over*
- ☞ *More flexibility*

Reframes and Empowers

- ☞ *Allows both parents to engage in program and improve skills*
- ☞ *The family chooses how to meet the WR*

33 VSA § 1113(c): refers to the work requirement hours per household/composition

Ability to work	Current Work Requirements for Participants in 2-parent Families		Current Federal Work Requirement & DCF Proposal
	Parent	Current Work Requirement	
Both parents able to work	Principal earner (PEP)	40 Hours per week, or 35 hours per week in a job the employer defines as full-time	Two-Parent Households, both receiving Reach Up: 35 hours per week for the family, or the combined number of hours they are able to work, not to exceed 35 hours per week
	Primary caretaker of the child	None unless the PEP is sanctioned, then the primary caretaker must fulfill the PEPs work requirement	
	Both parents	40 hours per week divided between parents sharing work requirement	
One able to work, one unable to work or only able to work part-time	Parent able to work	30 hours per week	
	Parent able to work part-time	None	
	Parent unable to work	None	
One able to work part-time at least 30 hours per week; one unable to work or only able to work part-time	Parent able to work part-time at least 30 hours per week	30 hours per week	
	Parent #2 able to work part-time	None	
	Parent unable to work	None	
Both parents able to work part-time	Both parents	30 hours per week combined or the combined number of hours they are able to work part-time, whichever is less	
One able to work part-time one unable to work	Parent able to work part-time	30 hours per week or the number of hours the parent is able to work part-time, whichever is less	
	Parent unable to work	None	
One parent receiving SSI, one parent work eligible; youngest child age 6 or older	Work eligible parent	30 hours per week	
	Parent receiving SSI	None	
One parent receiving SSI, one parent work eligible; youngest child under age 6	Work eligible parent	30 hours per week	20 hours per week (aligns with federal requirement)
	Parent receiving SSI	None	
Both parents unable to work	Both parents	None	No change/no work requirement per state guidelines

A

B

C

D

Proposed Work Requirements

Both parents able to work	Principal earner (PEP)	40 Hours per week, or 35 hours per week in a job the employer defines as full-time	Two-Parent Households, both receiving Reach Up: 35 hours per week for the family, or the combined number of hours they are able to work, not to exceed 35 hours per week
	Primary caretaker of the child	None unless the PEP is sanctioned, then the primary caretaker must fulfill the PEP's work requirement	
	Both parents	40 hours per week divided between parents sharing work requirement	
One able to work, one unable to work or only able to work part-time	Parent able to work	30 hours per week	
	Parent able to work part-time	None	
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	Parent unable to work	None	
Both parents able to work part-time	Both parents	30 hours per week combined or the combined number of hours they are able to work part-time, whichever is less	
One able to work part-time one unable to work	Parent able to work part-time	30 hours per week or the number of hours the parent is able to work part-time, whichever is less	
	Parent unable to work	None	

Section A: Two parents receiving Reach Up

Proposed Work Requirements

Section B: One parent receiving SSI – other parent able to work youngest child age 6 or *older*

One parent receiving SSI, one parent work eligible; youngest child age 6 or older	Work eligible parent	30 hours per week	30 hours per week for the work eligible parent
	Parent receiving SSI	None	

Proposed Work Requirements

Section C: One parent receiving SSI – other parent able to work youngest child *under age 6*

One parent receiving SSI, one parent work eligible; youngest child under age 6	Work eligible parent	30 hours per week	20 hours per week (aligns with federal requirement)
	Parent receiving SSI	None	

Proposed Work Requirements

Section D: Both parents unable to work

Both parents unable to work	Both parents	None	No change/no work requirement per state guidelines
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- The family and case manager work together
- They establish attainable goals with the understanding that the ultimate goal is 35 hours/week

Educational deferment

- ☞ Reduces “hassle” of piecing together work requirement with other activities*
- ☞ Allows participants to focus intensively on education*

Creates Slack

- ☞ Builds more time in to focus on education*
- ☞ Frees up time to work on other training, education or work simultaneously*

Reframes and Empowers

- ☞ Puts participants in the “driver’s seat”*
- ☞ When someone is ready to work on education – the time is right*
- ☞ Model for children – work on education together – everyone wants a better future for their kids!*

33 VSA § 1114(b): refers to how work requirement may be modified or deferred

Education Deferment

Adult Education Centers

- ☞ Vermont Adult Learning —————→
- ☞ Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (NEKLS) —————→
- ☞ Tutorial Center —————→
- ☞ Central Vermont Basic Ed —————→

Districts Served

- ☞ Middlebury, Burlington, St. Albans, Rutland, Hartford
- ☞ Newport, St. Johnsbury
- ☞ Bennington
- ☞ Morrisville, Barre, Hartford

Centers are generally able to offer 10-15 hours of class/tutoring time; students complete at least an additional 1 hour of homework per hour of class time