

Advisory Council on Child Poverty & Strengthening Families off-site meeting
11-21-2019 5pm-7:30pm
Rutland Middle School, Rutland , VT
Minutes

Legislative Members Present: Senator Debbie Ingram (Chair), Representative Diane Lanpher (Vice Chair), Representative Larry Cupoli, Senator Dick McCormack, Senator James McNeil

Other Members Present: Katie Ballard, Coleen Hale, Karen Lafayette, Erhard Mahnke, Sandy Paritz, Sarah Phillips, Auburn Watersong

Staff Present: Katie McLinn, Mike Ferrant, *Office of Legislative Council*

1. *What do you think are the biggest challenges facing Vermonters in poverty today?*

- Low income; insufficient wages
- Limited opportunity due to disability
- Job loss
- Benefits cliff
- Rents are too high
- Earning potential is much less than living expenses
- Mass transit system is lacking, particularly in rural communities
- Addressing the needs of homeless children, including keeping them in school
- Lack of childcare options; high cost of child care
- Limited availability of legal aid
- Food shelf running out of food
- Elderly: making their money stretch
- Lack of communication among service providers
- Job training

2. *From your experience and perspective, what works well to help lift Vermonters out of poverty?*

- Good paying jobs
- Flexible schedule/Comp Time; particularly for parents
- Previously utilized welfare to work/25% formula
- Health of family
- Scattered site leases
- Housing near school
- Hardship application process
- Sick days
- Increase Reach up; it currently addresses only 49.6% of basic needs

- Service providers embedded in community
- Building relationships between Providers and clients
- Human connections
- Understanding safety boundaries

3. *From your experience and perspective, what does not work well and can be improved?*

- Medicating children without treatment
- Create/Open day labor for persons in need of employment: Laid off workers, out of jail
- Teach children job skills
- One-time housing: Funds cap can be improved
- Day labor opportunities: flexibility
- Daycare/school closings due to weather
- Parent-unfriendly work environment
- Daycare short and over regulated
- Services difficult to navigate if complex issues
- Too much shuffling between agencies
- Lack of access to low barrier shelters
- Lack of housing for at risk youth (unaccompanied)
- Childcare for 2nd/3rd shift

- Access to Childcare
Adjust benefits cliff

- Financial literacy
Teach at a young age; include in school curriculum

- More money for support services
Mental health
No silos of services

- Generational Poverty **Unexpected costs**
 - Poor access to nutrition

- Taking away stigma
Food shelf should have a store atmosphere
“Nothing about us without us”
Having the right people at table
Intentional collaboration

- Workforce Development
Straight cash
Universal income study

Wrap up

Priorities

- 1. Housing**
- 2. Raising the Minimum Wage**
- 3. One stop shopping for Services**
- 4. Childcare**
- 5. Public Health**
- 6. Benefit Cliff**