

From: Eileen Peltier [epeltier@downstreet.org]
Sent: Sunday, January 20, 2019 9:11 AM
To: Theresa Utton
Subject: Comment for the Budget Adjustment Public Hearing

Please see comment below from Eileen Peltier on behalf of Downstreet Housing and Community Development.

Downstreet Housing & Community Development strongly supports the request to reject the concept of “caseload savings” in the Reach Up program and reinvest every penny available into the benefits for families with children. As the leading housing provider in Central Vermont, we are in constant communication with families and the challenges they face are quite extraordinary, despite available resources. We live in a costly environment, particularly in reference to housing, and as a result, this diminishes the investment families can make elsewhere, including nutrition and meals. For this reason, I have co-chaired the Washington County Hunger Council for several years.

Vermont families deserve our best effort; the goal of assistance should not be focused solely on "quantity" but also the "quality" offered, particularly when you have the means to do so. As you know, the Reach Up benefit is currently well below the statutory goal of a basic needs budget, which even at 100% would only be subsistence survival for a household. When fewer families with children need Reach Up, we strongly urge you to allocate the remaining funds to increase the benefit for the current and future recipients.

Thank you for your consideration and for all that you do for Vermonters.

In peace and purpose,

eileen