

**From:** Tawnya Kristen [tkristen@gmunityway.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 21, 2019 11:38 AM  
**To:** Theresa Utton  
**Subject:** Budget Adjustment Hearing Comment

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Theresa:

Please accept the provided comment below for The Budget Adjustment public hearing.

As the Executive Director of Green Mountain United Way, the agency that supports the health, education and financial stability of all people in the Central and Northeast Kingdom regions of Vermont, I strongly encourage you 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 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, the funds allocated should be used to increase the benefit for the current and future recipients.

Reach Up is fundamentally a program designed to ensure that children are safe, warm, sheltered, clothed and fed. To assume that children currently receiving Reach Up benefits, particularly those living in our most poorest counties in Vermont, would not greatly benefit from increased support in the most basic of human needs, is a demonstration of limited understanding as to what it means to be a child in poverty. It is of vital importance that we move past the acceptable term of “caseload savings” and embrace the actions of saving children. I ask that you reject the Reach Up caseload savings and direct DCF to allow every available dollar to increasing benefits for Reach Up recipient families.

Thank you for your consideration and care for all Vermonters.

Kind Regards,  
Tawnya Kristen

--

**Tawnya Kristen/Executive Director/Green Mountain United Way**  
73 Main Street Suite 33, Montpelier, VT 05602  
P: [802-613-3989](tel:802-613-3989)

[GIVE](#) | [ADVOCATE](#) | [VOLUNTEER](#) | LIVE UNITED™  
[www.gmunityway.org](http://www.gmunityway.org) Find us on: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)