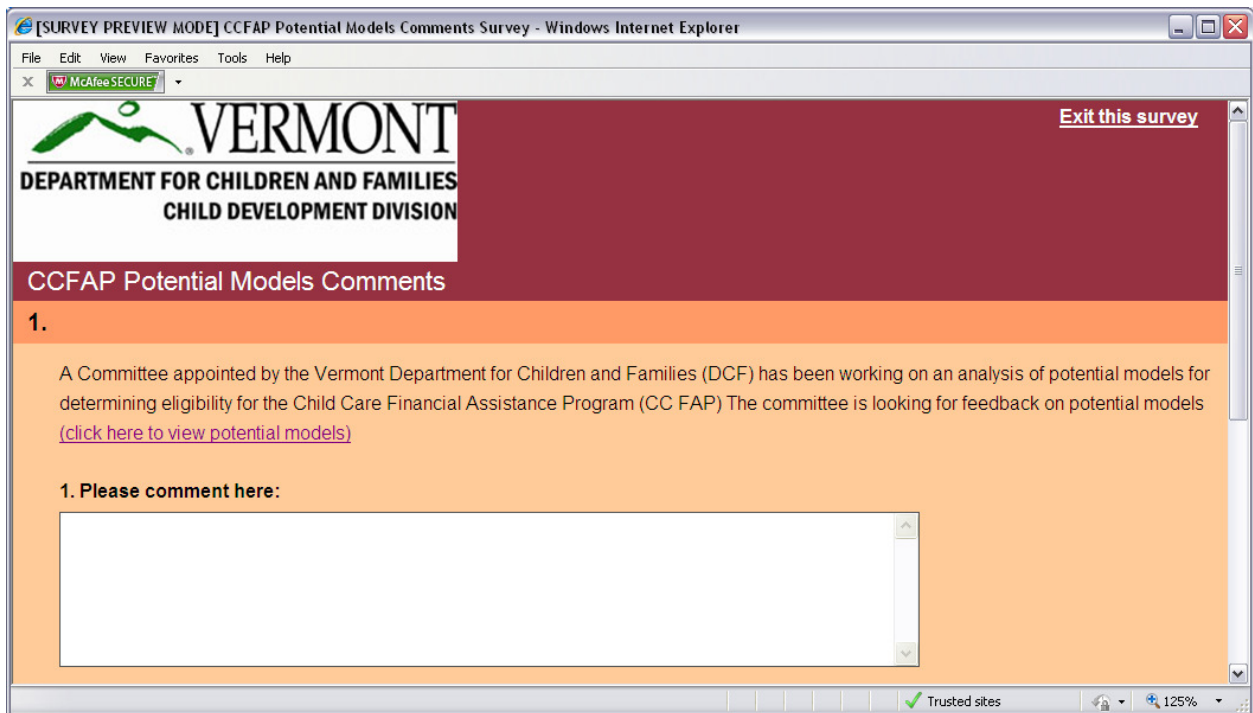


## Child Care Financial Assistance Eligibility Determination Analysis Potential Models Comments, 04/15/2011



I consider myself a fairly well-educated person and difficulty understanding the differences between all the various options. Being a parent who only receives child care subsidy as my daughter was adopted through the foster care system, that is the only benefit with which I am strongly acquainted. Even so, I would dread the prospect of having to navigate parent portals to access the information, etc that I needed. It's hard enough doing this with a local worker that contacts me whenever I need to update our paperwork. I would have a strong preference for a model that would allow for local contact and administration of benefits programs, even if it were in conjunction with state level offices. Being able to talk with someone on the other side of town is much easier and more comfortable than talking with someone in Montpelier or Waterbury or wherever. They know us here.

4/17/11 4:54AM

Community based model works really well. It also helps to screen families and help them with other services such as health care or early intervention.

4/16/11 11:04AM

I'm writing out of concern for parents and their need to have a voice about the proposed changes to the CCFAP. As a member of a community service agency, I've been aware of the changes since 1/10. We've wanted to include parents in this discussion all along because it is their right to have this information and be able to weigh in like everyone else. In fact they are the very reason such services exist, and along with child care providers, they have a major stake in the outcome of these decisions. When a community agency in another county wrote an article for

their newsletter on this topic they were told by a CDD staff member that they could not run the article. This point was made again during a fall meeting for resource development staff where they were told not to write anything about the proposed changes in their newsletters until the state had a chance to send a letter to the parents and providers who would be impacted. The letter never went out. I first heard we could share information with parents at the interactive television event on 4/4. That left very little time to inform parents. If I had to guess, I'd say as few as 5% of parents in our community have an inkling that change may be coming. It just doesn't seem right to proceed without giving more opportunities for parents to have their voices heard. Thank you for inviting my input.

4/16/11 4:24AM

My worry is that it may seem as though the State will save money by centralizing services, though it will be at the cost to families. By this I mean that families will no longer be able to sit with a specialist and ask questions or tell their story while they fill out their application. They are able to do this now and I know that if it wasn't for this type of social support, many folks would simply not apply. It seems that centralization, even if it saved money initially, would only exasperate other social issues such as abuse, neglect, substance abuse and homelessness to name a few. Children who might otherwise be in childcare will now be home in a less favorable and stressful environment.

4/16/11 3:56AM

The Community Model will best serve the families that my program serves. These are the families that get qualified because they or their children have special needs; they live in really stressful situations brought on by intense poverty; they do not have access to computers; their phone numbers change very often; they do not have addresses; and they simply need a lot of support to follow through and find the documentation needed. These families will just give up and children will not be served. My program serves 250 children and 70% are subsidy qualified. If subsidy is too difficult, my program will be impacted in a significant way. Our staff cannot take on all the tasks needed to help our parents!

4/16/11 3:22AM

I have heard a lot of people say "keep it local" and I, for the most part, agree with keeping a local community-based model. However, I know that costs need to be cut significantly and therefore think that the hybrid model would be our next best option. Change is hard to accept and people will complain, but we have to choose the option that makes sense as a whole. We cannot have our cake and eat it too, we must make some sacrifices. The hybrid model seems as though it would be a good compromise between keeping things completely community-based and switching to complete centralization. As childcare providers we know what it's like to be flexible and make compromises on a daily basis. This is just one more aspect of our lives that we will learn to deal with.

4/16/11 2:55AM

As a person working with low income families I see the need there is for support in paying for childcare. I feel though that some of our parents get lost along the way-these are the parents that are trying to work, lose certain aid they receive because they are working, but are stuck because they are not making enough to pay for bills as well as childcare and other expenses they come across. Most of the time I hear that it is easier for them to have more children and quit their job and then they can receive services. I feel that some parents know the system too well and are always able to get services some how, while others are trying to work and get ahead and just need some assistance.

4/16/11 2:04AM

I assist families in my program to maintain their ccfap certificate. In two years, only one family has ever attempted to use the online application, and could not understand the system- a parent that is usually computer saavy. Most families do not have a computer or internet access. Most families know the 2 women who work at the local office by name, and they know them, and the personalized care and assistance that they receive from them is invaluable. Transportation is another concern in a rural area like Vermont. If the system were to go centralized, Waterbury is hours away- impossible for families that have a difficult time maintaining and gassing a vehicle to bring their children to daycare or to go to work locally- if they own a car at all. I see value in keeping the CCFAP at the local level for these reasons. I would like to add that I also see value in linking the Economic Services and CCFAP databases. Once a family has gotten the application submitted the even MORE difficult part- BY FAR is getting it completed- tracking down additional evidence like paystubs or other sources of income, child support, doctor's records, etc. is a MONUMENTAL task for many families, and some lose their certifications because of this. I think anything you can do to streamline this area would be one answer to the challenge for change- LINKING the databases or creating ONE SHARED database of information and documentation provided. Another factor that can be looked at is the length of time a certificate is valid for. Some families, like family support or reach-up or education service needs, are re-certifying every 3 months- the cost of issuing one year certificates with less administrative cost vs. the cost of shorter certificates with administering one family's account 4X/yr. should be examined. Also, the administrative costs of a 4 week work search certificate should be reconsidered. In our current economy, combined with the education level of most Vermonters, it is almost impossible to find and begin a job in 4 weeks. If families were granted the 3 month certificate when they apply for a work search certificate, that would be more realistic, and save the state the extra admin costs as well. I think Model 2A would be a disaster, Model 3 already is showing to be not working for the folks in the St Johnsbury area from the VIT session, I think keeping Model 1 with incorporating elements of Model 2B would be best. I think we should NOT rush this and proceed carefully, because if parents give up and do not obtain a CCFAP, their children will suffer from inconsistent, inadequate care or the Economic Services Dept will be strained due to more people not working and applying for benefits. Also providers may be economically strained and we will lose quality providers- again harming our children.

4/16/11 2:00AM

I felt that as a preschool teacher and a mother of three children that I needed to voice my concern over these changes. I have lately had the unpleasant opportunity of dealing with a department being moved up north from Bennington. I receive some assistance and had it all screwed up by

paper working being shuffled around and not having an office down here to address it. I spent two months trying to fix someone else's mistake. If there had been an office here I could have saved me and your staff time and stress by going locally. I just feel that the distance is going to cause a lot of problems for both your staff and parents that are honestly trying to get a head in these tough times. When life is already stressful it may seem hopeless to some when paper work gets messed up and it seems like no one is listening. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns  
Tammy Gosley

4/16/11 1:59AM

Our program in Chittenden County serves between 20 and 24 children on subsidy each year and families must renew their paperwork every six months. Families qualify through reach up, special health needs, and family support. I have attended many meetings about proposed changes because the current system, as implemented, does not work for many families and causes loss of revenue for our program every year. The primary issue we face now is a gap in communication between our local R and R agency, the parent, and our program. In many cases families are not covered for weeks at a time because a. the parent did not complete the paperwork that was mailed to them, b. the parent did not receive the paperwork that was mailed to an old address, c. the parent has difficulty reading and completing the form independently, or d. the parent returned an incomplete application and the R and R agency has mailed them a notice that they may or may not understand. In almost all of these cases our program staff can help by working with the parent to complete paperwork, giving the parent reminders about deadlines they must meet, answering questions about how to meet the application requirements, or providing the appropriate blank forms. The reason these things do not happen is that our program staff do not receive timely communication from our R and R agency about missing paperwork, missed deadlines, or unmet criteria for coverage ( reach up requirements, etc. ). In many cases we do not find out an application is incomplete until after a deadline has passed and we begin to miss payments from CDD. Therefore, we are advocating for a system that can do the following: allow providers direct access to information about the status of an application ( including missing paperwork) if they have the parent's permission to help with the application process acknowledge the role providers are already playing in helping parents complete applications address the fact that written communication sent by mail to a parent's home may not be an effective tool understand that many parents will not share the necessary information unless they have a trusting relationship with a responsive person who is helping them through the process ( face to face or by phone) regularly seek feedback from parents and providers about how the system is working for them I am not going to "vote" for one of the proposed models. I have been involved in many discussions about these proposed changes, some of which were extremely tense and caused ill will between my agency, the R and R provider, and families without leading to a single positive change. I believe parents, the main consumers of this service, have been left out of this conversation. Without their voice we can't choose a new system to meet their needs. My main request is that the State address problems that you know exist and create a system that responds to regular feedback from providers and parents.

4/16/11 1:50AM

I am writing in support of the Model #1 – Community-based Service. I think that it's most important to keep services together in the community because that is what is most efficient and

effective for families and providers. The system needs to be holistic for them. That means keeping child care related services together. That's why these services were put into the community in the first place. Support for clients applying for CCFAP and their eligibility determination should be done by the same person in the same place. That specialist should be available to answer the provider's questions as well. A client should be able to walk into a local office and find a professional friend who can listen their story and help them get what they need. CDD should do everything it can to create a collaborative working relationship with the local agencies to support them in doing the best they can for parents and families. Here's an important example of why income eligibility determination should stay local. I know that there are times when child care providers will not let a parent drop a child off in the morning if they don't have a current subsidy certificate. When the parent comes into the local office, the eligibility specialist is able to take their paper work, process it right away, and the parent leaves with a valid certificate. The child can go to child care and the parent can go to work. The parent keeps their job and the family remains stable. If the system were centralized, this would not be possible. The parent can't drive to Waterbury to get their certificate. Even with the hybrid model, this type of turnaround is very unlikely to happen. While the hybrid may work, we heard at the VIT meeting that it could also lead to even more fragmentation and more phone calls back and forth from the parent to the navigator to the eligibility specialist and around the circle again. Why separate support for navigation from eligibility determination? The hybrid model is clearly a compromise. I've heard that it hasn't been fully tested. In reality, it may function no better than a store brand band-aid for an inadequately resourced centralized system that will be lacking the essential human component. Once centralization happens, we can't go back. If the hybrid model shows promise, it should be fully tested before a decision is made. It should be compared to the community-based model, like the work you've done with the service model this time. At the local level, community specialists are strong advocates for families and are committed to helping them get as much financial assistance as is possible within the rules of the system. Community-based workers go the extra mile to help them maximize their eligibility within the guidelines. Parents may qualify under several service needs and the worker at the community level is committed to helping them find the one that will maximize their benefit. With the State taking this over, it will be difficult for workers to move families between the income related service needs and the specialize service needs remaining in the community. This is seamless within community agencies now. In addition, workers may be more concerned about minimizing the expense in the state budget than helping families get as much help as they can qualify for. I've heard the staff at CDD really wants to centralize services. Is this a bias left from the old administration? I've heard that CDD will need to choose what it funds and understand that these are tough budget times. I've heard that CDD says that to preserve the community-based system, funds would be shifted from the budget for subsidy payments implying that provider reimbursement rates would be affected. The former administration used these words to frame the choices as well and I wonder if these are truly the words of the current administration. This seems like a scare tactic to me and I don't think we should be pitting one part of the system against another. It all needs to work together. I think that there may be other places to shift money in the huge DCF budget. The information sheet we got at the VIT stakeholders meeting says that there is \$37,000,000 in benefits paid. I've heard that the amount cut from the budget is \$600,000. That's a little more than 1% of the total benefits paid. How exact is the budget? If 1% were reallocated to keeping the system community based would it really affect benefits? What if the actual amount of benefits paid was 2% below budget in the coming year? How much does

the actual amount of benefits vary from budget from year to year? I've heard that CDD got money for a projected 300 new cases for the coming year and the sheet says that each child costs \$4700. That's \$1,410,000 in new money. Are they sure that there will be 300 new cases? What if there are only 200? That would leave \$470,000 to preserve community-based services. That's almost enough to cover the cut. It seems to me that the money in question is little compared to the possible ramifications of centralization. I've heard that there will be only 7 eligibility specialists doing the work in Waterbury, about a third of the number currently in community based agencies. It's hard for me to believe that the CDD has found so much efficiency that they can do the same work with a third of the staff. I think that in the end, if the system is centralized system it will cost more than the CDD has estimated. There will be a crisis just like what happened last year with modernization. Families and providers will be hurt and may lose jobs and businesses. Then more money will need to be shifted anyway. We will have lost what's most important – the human side of human services. This loss will be in the name of efficiency that will not be realized. My hope is that the new administration has learned from last year's debacle and will repeat that mistake. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

4/16/11 1:43AM

I strongly support the community-based model, as I believe it best serves the needs of families, children, and providers in terms of accessing child care that best matches children's and families' needs, dealing with payment issues for providers, and addressing the myriad issues that can arise within the framework of an ongoing relationship with a known caseworker. Using technology to increase efficiency is a wonderful idea, but should \*not\* replace community-based services - use technology to \*enhance\* community-based services. The small-scale nature of Vermont is an advantage, not a disadvantage, and when we have tried to use economies of scale, we have generally been quite displeased with the impersonal nature of the results, the administrative overhead, and the inefficiencies that result with managing larger more complex structures. Keep this system in the communities where it belongs, where the children and families and providers are. Thank you.

4/16/11 1:22AM

To Whom It May Concern: I work for Central Vermont Community Action Council's Head Start program. We rely heavily on the CCFA program when determining eligibility for Head Start and Early Head Start. One piece that has become a burden on both our program and the CCFA program is when we are asking for this eligibility determination. Any family who receives CCFA (for the purpose of employment or education) is automatically eligible for Head Start services. We are required to view (and soon we will have to retain a copy of what we viewed) a document stating that they are receiving CCFA. With CCFA going to a centralized system, we are afraid that individuals will be flooded with releases and requests for copies of the CCFA certificates for Head Start eligibility verification purposes. It would be nice to have someone in the local community partner office to be able to work with to obtain these certificates. One possible option that i feel would benefit both of our programs would be if our Head Start eligibility manager had access to the database, it would eliminate the flood of releases and requests for information to the CCFA program that would potentially come from our offices in Washington, Orange and Lamoille counties. Please consider this opportunity with whichever

model is carried forward. I can be contacted at 477-5153. Thank you, Jonathan Boyd Systems Manager CVCAC Head Start 802-477-5153

4/16/11 12:23AM

PLEASE do NOT consider a strictly centralized model for Child Care Financial Assistance Programs. My experience has been VERY positive with your model #1, the community based model. These folks are able to do personalized visitations to Child Care centers, give perspective and objective information to possible users of the system for their very unique children (as we well know, understanding these variations simply support a better 'match' to individual children. As a user of the system in a consultative way for parents, schools AND children, the community-based model has worked extremely well. In addition, I was also a DIRECT user of the system when I needed to assist my stepson for HIS son (my grandson) as a result of an emergency situation in his family. As a result of the community-based model, I was able to match my grandson with a fabulous, stimulating and safe child care while, at the same time, give my stepson (as a single dad) a vehicle for financial assistance. Thank you! Dr. Vanessa Zerillo Essex Junction, VT

4/16/11 12:02AM

I do understand the budget crisis and need for cuts where they can be made. With that said I also understand that child care financial assistance is very different from any other public services that is provided through ESD so it is not a simple process to combine this with other application processes, and a community presence must be in effect as child care assistance sometimes requires immediate attention and processing due to parents and providers situations. I do believe that some technological improvements could be made such as sharing information with the other ESD application computer system (more so than is done now) to save money down the road but we also must investigate and explore all opportunities before leaping head first. I don't believe that these models besides the one that is currently in place have had sufficient investigation and research done on them to be sustainable and able to put in to place this July. I believe the model in which the community only has limited roles and no processing actually done in the community would also hurt parents and providers. People could come in to check on their status or give us information but we would not be able to immediately do anything with that and it would leave us and parents and providers feeling helpless. I hope all facts are considered and the State sees the value of CCFAP being kept in the community as ESD nor CDD are any where near ready nor would they be trained in time to take this over in July and the community would be at a great loss if they could not come in and have case managers there to serve them as they do now.

4/15/11 11:21PM

I am in support of Model 1 for the Child Care Financial Assistance Program. I STRONGLY feel the determination of child care financial assistance should STAY in the community!!! The people in the community know what the needs of families and providers are, because they live and work in those communities. As a result they are able to provide a more personable service, A "HUMAN" service, which is what clients & providers want!!! They don't want to have to be bounced around from person to person, repeating their stories, etc. until they reach the person

who can finally help them (which can end up being days if they have to leave a message), which I feel will happen if the CCFAP is centralized. Centralizing the CCFAP would "DE-HUMANIZE" the service!!! After attending the interactive meeting on the 4th, and hearing about the problems in the other county that lost their community support with providers not getting paid, not getting returned phone calls for days, and paperwork getting lost, etc., I am convinced MORE THAN EVER that centralizing CCFAP is the WRONG thing to do!!! After all, we are talking about people's children, money, and child care provider's livelihood!!! If paperwork is always getting lost or not getting processed in a timely manner, then you will have parents who can't go to work, because their child care provider is not getting paid (and the parents can't afford to pay the full cost). This will cause a "snowball" effect: If parents can't go to work because they don't have child care, then you will have parents losing their jobs! Families will then end up having to go onto public assistance through Economic services (reach up), which will end up costing the state MORE money, because they will be paying out more dollars for public assistance! In addition to these affecting families, you will also have child care providers going out of business because they are not getting paid, and therefore will be forced to close and go out into the workforce so they can provide for their own families! We are ALREADY loosing providers almost on a daily basis. In these tough economic times, it is ESSENTIAL and VITAL to make sure parents and providers receive the utmost best HUMAN service, which they can access in THEIR community! We have already seen the disastrous results of the centralizing of Economic Services, and we cannot afford to follow suit with the CCFAP!!! I do recognize the need to save money, but I believe this can still be accomplished by the state and the community partners working TOGETHER to save costs while maintaining the CCFA service in the community through using technology (which the state admitted is not in place yet! Another reason why centralizing is not a good idea) and brainstorming other ways to save money! I think it is ridiculous that the state feels they can have only 7 people determining CCFAC for the whole state of Vermont! As someone said in the interactive meeting, "if it's not broken, why try fixing it?" Right now you have around 20 people in the community who are KNOWLEDGEABLE people & know what they are doing. You now want to take this service out of the community, and have only 7 UNTRAINED people who don't know what they are doing, determining the CCFA and who will have caseloads of 700+ per person! This IS ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS!!! How do you expect to maintain the HIGH level of customer service, which clients and providers currently receive and have come to EXPECT? The hybrid model is also NOT a good idea! You will basically have community members who will "have their hands tied" because they won't be able to help them in the manner in which the client needs, as they will just be the "middle man." At the interactive meeting there was an overwhelming response to keep the CCFACP in the community; I hope that the state really listens to the community!! Too much is at stake here!!! More time and research and input from the community (including the community partners) should have been put into this!!! Also, I don't feel the state has done a very good job in informing parents of these proposed changes and how they can provide their input; I feel the parent's have been "left in the dark." I think the state should have sent by mail (yes through the actual postal service) to ALL families CURRENTLY receiving the Child Care financial assistance, information regarding all the proposed models and how they can provide their input!!! Now that would be a worthwhile INVESTMENT for the state, to spend a few dollars in postage, to make sure the people who will be affected the most by these changes, have the information needed to provide their input! This is after all a service



for them, and they deserve to be heard (as well as the child care providers; it is a service for them as well)!!!

4/15/11 10:40PM

I was at the interactive meeting a week ago. I was happy to hear about the good experiences providers and families had with their local teams but that is not the experience in Chittenden county. Providers and families do not have a warm and welcoming experience with Child Care Resource. Some times it takes along time to hear back from the workers. We have many refugee families and I have never heard of workers getting interpreters to help them make their way thru the process of getting subsidy and they receive letters in english to tell them what to do in their process they cant read english. A local experience probably would be best but CCR needs to change.

4/15/11 9:29PM

Model # 1: I am writing to support the community based model. Removing the services that are currently available for families and providers would be detrimental to our community on many levels. It is unrealistic to think that one specialist could manage 700 client files without hiring additional staff and delegating some of the duties. Several times per week parents come into our local office (often in tears) in need of immediate personal assistance. Some are in desperate need of their Financial Assistant Specialist to drop what they are doing and determine their eligibility on the spot and then call their provider to assure them that we have all of the required documentation. After that we create the certificates so that they can show proof of their eligibility to the provider or they may lose their spot at the daycare which may result in the parent losing their job. This is just one example of the complex situations that can occur on a daily basis. I am very concerned about how the end result of the other Models may impact our children, parents and providers. We are called Human Service Agencies for a reason. Please don't base your decision on cutting costs alone.

4/15/11 9:04PM

Thanks CDD for giving us the opportunity to respond. I did attend the VIT meeting to hear the report from this analysis group. It helped to listen to people in other parts of the state to hear how things were going in their with eligibility determination. After working for many years with parents in our center to obtain eligibility, it feels like we have a very different situation in Chittenden County. In other parts of the state the people who were at the VIT mtg., sounded like they were very satisfied with the services they received. I know these sentiments are not the same in Chittenden Co. Parents in our center find CCR in Williston very difficult to work with - they always have to leave messages, people don't get back to them in a timely manner and they are often confused by what information they are required to produce. One of the other problems with having CCR as the intermediary is that as providers, we don't know what paperwork is required from each family. Because things were always so difficult to resolve and understand with CCR, eight years ago I received permission to collect paperwork from parents and submit it directly to the CDD office in Waterbury. The work of obtaining eligibility for parents became so much easier at this point. Since we see parents everyday, we were able to get the correct paperwork more quickly for an easier turnaround. We had direct access to Ann Rada in

Waterbury and she was always able to tell us what the missing pieces were for each family. I am firmly in support of Model #2A, the Centralized Model which would be housed at CDD, not ESD. I know it will difficult to begin with a new system. Internet access will be an issue for some parents and we will have to navigate work out the kinks as they arise, but I feel like it could be a viable system in Chittenden County. I feel that I have already "field tested" such a system until last year when I was forced to return to the old frustrating system at CCR. We are now back to having to wait forever without really knowing what is required of each family unless we make alot of phone calls to both parents and CCR. I can give you names of parents to talk to who are very dissatisfied with CCR if you need more information. Please call me if you need anything more. I'm sorry I have not been more more communicative with all these changes. I am so busy and overwhelmed by the difficulties of keeping all our services available, our finances intact, our staff supported and our children healthy that there is hardly time to think, much less time to read and respond to emails. We have 37 state funded families at our center, Trinity Children's Center - feel free to call visit or call us anytime Thanks again for all your work, Maureen Danielczyk

4/15/11 8:19PM

Hello! I have two children who are currently eligible for CC FAP. I have been using the program for the last three years. I am very happy with the current system which most closely resembles Model #1. I have had very good response from my case worker, who regularly emails me with any changes or reminders that I need to be aware of. If there is something I need I email her and she has a response for me within an hour. Unfortunately, having used some of the other social services the state has to offer, such as VHAP and fuel assistance, I have come to learn that there is a GREAT deal of redundancy within the state agencies. I get ten mailings on one topic, which all state the same thing. If I have a question I cannot email, I have to call during limited hours, and I usually get an automated system which requires a password that I do not have, and I have to call a different number, which is out of service and I never resolve the issue, and if I do it takes two weeks. I would strongly urge that you leave well enough alone and continue with the current system. Thank you!

4/15/11 11:42AM

I definitely prefer the Community-Based Model of Eligibility Determination for CCFAP. I have a two-year old son with special needs. We currently take advantage of child care financial assistance to send our child to childcare two days a week. I believe that as you move away from eligibility programs based in the community, and towards a "stream-lined, more efficient" approach of a statewide system, you lose accessibility and the human touch. I like knowing that people in my own community are working towards my and my child's best interest. The people at Windham Child Care Assn. not only help determine and explain eligibility to me, but they are also familiar with child care in this area in many other ways too.

4/15/11 9:02AM

i really believe model 1 should stand i know for me it is more personal and easier expecially being a disabled mom i was able to go there and get the help i needed

4/15/11 8:23AM

I am a grandparent and part time provider for a young child enrolled in the program. His Mom, my daughter, is a single Mom in her late 40s, and this little boy is her first and only child, a very much wanted and loved little boy. Without help with child care I am not sure any of the three of us could cope. Mother needs time away from child, child needs time with other children and to develop skills of interaction, and I can not be available on the regular basis necessary to provide all of the care. It truly takes a community to raise a child. I hope Vermont can continue to provide this community to Mothers and families and young children to provide the necessary enrichment of life skills that are every child's birth right! Yes, some take advantage of the system. But for most families the care we give our young ones will return benefits many fold in their older school and young adult years. Keep up the good work!!

4/15/11 7:55AM

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4/15/11 7:55AM

I do not like the idea of having one central place such as Waterbury to handle all the financial transactions, parent questions, providers questions. I, as a registered home provider, have relationships with the subsidy specialist that work at our local resource and referral agency. This relationship makes my job easier and helps the parents with their needs. I cannot be calling Waterbury and reaching a different person to try to get questions answered and parents needs met. My job requires me to ensure the safety of the children in my group. Personally I like the way the system is set up now and do not support the change that is being recommended.

4/15/11 7:21AM

I do believe that it would be in the best interest for Child Care Resource to not handle subsidy matters or Professional Development for Early Childcare Workers. As a mom and a providers I have experienced the upmost disrespect from the staff their. They are not profesional and it seems to me that decisions about Family Support Vouchers to some of the most volnerible families is rejected based on ZERO substancial reasons! Families need to be treated with care, searching for childcare and recieving subsidy is not an easy process and many times in my years of raising children I have felt the affects of the caddy nature from these folks. Additionally the past board members have given profetional development oppertunities to ECE. Apon recently

leaving the office after a training I over hear the past president of the Board Ellen Droulette laughing that she didnt think the content of the presentation went over well because it was over everyone's head. This is not how we treat people that work hard to provide the best care for families in our community. Had I taken this information to other folks at CCR I would have been meet with the "friends" of Ellens who feel she is a wonderful profetional person. I did not see this side and was sad to have been treated like anything other than an equal.

4/15/11 5:32AM

I believe at this time that the state of Vermont's computer system cannot handle to influx of the child care financial assistance program at this time. State workers seem to be overwhelmed and according to many people who currently receive services, efficiency and communication are both major issues went it come to processing state applications. Local agencies can process child care applications within 30 minutes if a parent comes to the office will all of their required information. This allows the parent to gain and maintain employment.

4/15/11 3:49AM

Model #1: Community Based Model is the best scenario for parents and providers,

4/15/11 3:16AM

My concerns with Subsidy presently, and especially in any model aside from #1 Local is that Vermont still does not have internet everywhere. There are providers that cannot reasonably enter attendance & access document, etc., and many families who will not be capable of accessing- let alone navigating- the system. These families are typically those with the highest needs. If you centralize any aspect of this process for them, they are going to be dealt a great disservice. They are precisely the ones who desperately need the local connections!!! Thank you, Evelyn Trier, Director The Family Garden, Inc.

4/15/11 3:03AM

I think that the community based model would be the best for families and providers. When you are having problems with the appilcation or other problems, it is so great to have a person that you know to call. Having everything done online is so impersonal. What about families that do not have a computer. We need to think about what we would want if we were having trouble. Do you want to talk to a person or a computer? I know that I would want a person to talk with, sometimes hearing anothers voice can make things feel better.

4/15/11 1:46AM

I find it much easier to have a local CC FAP, and would very inconvenient to have the changes made as propossed!

4/15/11 1:30AM

This year, I worked frequently with the local Bennington office to keep a subsidy certificate in place. I am worried if the system were centralized to hear back about my account. I would like offices to be kept at the local level. Work search should be longer periods of time because of the economy and it's harder to find a job and the cost of everything is going up, but not the paycheck to match.

4/15/11 1:17AM

I advocate that the CCFAP stays at the community/local level. I have been an after school provider for many years and have worked with eligibility specialists on at the local level.

4/15/11 1:02AM

Community Model serves the needs of families and communities the best. Other arms of AHS have tried the centralized model and it has resulted in enormous delays and difficulties with getting services to the people who need them. We need to keep the community model so that children and families can get the assistance they need close to home.

4/15/11 12:57AM

We need to keep in mind how this will impact the families we work with. ESD modernization was traumatic for many of our families. There are more families whose insurance is lapsing because they no longer have a person to contact for assistance. I do like that families can access the web to look at their benefits; this is effective if everyone has internet (there is no internet service at my house). I like the hybrid model. This way families can reach someone to assist them with the paperwork (there is a ton of paperwork for every application). As a parent of two children I look for one stop shops as much as possible. I am confident that CCFAP can be a one stop shop too! When families are needing child care they are already stressed and worried about leaving their child with a stranger. They need to have someone teach them questions to ask a provider, encourage them to visit, and then there is the transition! I think one application for all services is too long! Please keep in mind this is a sensitive area for families and the system needs to be sensitive to them too. We need to meet their needs so their children will become individuals that will contribute to their communities in a positive way..

4/15/11 12:29AM

I am an accredited home provider below are my thoughts on the models. I feel the community base model is the best. Without this I think you will be losing families and providers because it is a difficult process to keep up with and to do. I feel families will look more to the provider to help and as providers already work 10-11 hr days this will put an extra burden on them. I feel many will say it is not worth it. In today's world everything is becoming computerized and I feel human contact is important to the emotional/social piece of people's lives. Home providers already have less/limited contact with the community because they work from the home. The community base model gives providers a very much needed and important support system. They can meet and talk with someone they develop relationships with. Providers depend on this support and use the system in many different ways. Personal contact(face to face) is crucial. It scares me to think of the problems our society will be facing in the future because of the

declining face to face/one on one contact we are losing to computers/facebook/on-line classes etc. It may be easier for people and cut costs but which is more important? At the very least I feel there should be a combined model but I do not feel this will work well.

4/15/11 12:23AM

There is great value in a model that includes "community". Vermont should remain accessible-continue to be a caring state that acknowledges the strengths and individuality of its communities. For many people trying to access help and services, speaking to a real person is what makes all of the difference. It can be very daunting and discouraging to listen to a recorded message, choose from a list of options, or leave a confidential message. There are many very hard working families in need in my community. I would be saddened to see that their children don't get the same opportunities and choices as other children in my community. I vote to keep the "human" in human services! I think that a model that keeps the local community in the process is essential.

4/15/11 12:22AM

While I understand the need for considering changes to the system in order to save money, I am not sure any of the suggested models are sufficient. Centralizing the system may be an option down the road, but seems inappropriate at this time. We have several parents currently receiving financial assistance who do not have computers and/or have little or no experience with computers. If they do, it is basic knowledge - like e-mailing. In addition, we have parents who are functionally illiterate. They need significant support in completing paperwork. By centralizing the CCFAP, and making the process rely on computers, you would make access essentially impossible for these very needy families. In addition, there are a lot of issues with Bright Futures that have yet to be worked out. The first three years of having the Bright Futures system was a nightmare for providers - providing little confidence in the "technological enhancements" being proposed. To date, Bright Futures is still unable to notify a provider if a document is in the documents section of their portal. If you do not check it daily, you could miss important information. If Facebook can let you know when you have notices, mail, etc. - there seems to be no reason that Bright Futures can't. The centralizing of the ESD has proven to be a major challenge and is not a "model" of success in any way. It is difficult to see the "benefit" of any of the suggested changes without having a cost comparison for them. How can a decision be made without this information. Are we talking about saving pennies? If so, it is definitely not worth it. If the issue is greater consistency in determination - isn't that a training issue (which would not be helped by the reduction of funds to train specialists)? While the system certainly needs some improvements, I am concerned that the changes proposed will just make the situation worse - creating greater communication issues between providers and specialists; making access more difficult for parents & families who are most vulnerable and most in need of support; creating greater lag times in processing and response - an issue which has far reaching implications (can mean the difference between a parent being able to accept a job; securing and keeping a space in a program; providers receiving payment if they do accept a child when subsidy has not yet been approved, etc.) I would hope that more information regarding proposed changes would be forthcoming - such as a cost analysis; answers to questions about the number of specialist needed to "manage" the number of cases projected; how other services provided by CCR&R's would be provided (local trainings, etc.) I would

suspect that, as was experienced in other parts of the State where systems have changed (hybrid models) that many agencies would be unsustainable and therefore other services currently offered would go away. We already have a problem with not receiving enough support in remote parts of the State - this will most definitely add to the problem.

4/14/11 11:33PM

I am a provider in Burlington, VT. I work within an organization that is now "collaborating" with another. The program has become very large and the quality of childcare has been diminished. Bigger is not better. "Outsourcing" or "hybridization" is not better. Community based models seem to work best in an urban-environment. I would vote for #1 if I had a vote. Thank you.

4/14/11 11:23PM

Model #3: Hybrid Model: Centralized Eligibility Determination with Community Navigation I think this would be the most appropriate model to most effectively serve everyone involved.

4/14/11 11:10PM

I simply cannot imagine the process that I went through with my local eligibility specialist being completed via phone and mail. There was so much value in meeting face to face and having her listen to the complete picture of my situation. When something was confusing me to me, i was able to see her promptly.

4/14/11 11:08PM

My concern is that, based somewhat on the testimony of the providers in the St. J area, the good providers will want to deal less with the subsidy program since they are usually full and then subsidy clients will have to seek less quality providers.

4/14/11 10:50PM

I support the community-based model. I have found it the most effective when families have a single point of contact who is able to assist them in accessing services in an integrated way. Centralizing services will likely result in a system that is too difficult for families to navigate. Many families who qualify for CCFAP struggle to fill-out the paperwork and often need personalized assistance. I don't think a centralized service will provide this kind of support. From personal experience, I know the 3-square program became centralized last year. This was a negative shift that created redundancies and unclear lines of communication. I am concerned that centralization will create greater inefficiencies rather than fewer.

4/14/11 10:37PM

I feel this program is wonderful and has helped me out in many ways! I think if the staffing is cut back it will greatly effect the community that utilizes this program. If changes do occur I believe there needs to be a solid positive plan so the community/staff can feel confident and

comfortable. Not everyone makes a lot of money and it is a huge help for me to stay full time working mom and provide for my son and not live off the state money for housing, food etc. I appreciate this program!

4/14/11 10:27PM

I would support Model 1 or Model 3. I believe it is important for families to have access to a specialist in their own community who is familiar with the child care options in that same community. There needs to be human interaction/support from a dedicated, caring individual for these families, and I believe that is most likely to happen if some version of the community model is used. A centralized servicing center is the Wal-Mart of human services, and I mean that in a negative way!

4/14/11 10:24PM

I believe keeping the community based model would be in the best interest of the families who need these services. The community-based agencies that provide child care referral to families and work directly with families are irreplaceable.

4/14/11 10:22PM

I would NOT like to see the local contact ability go away. It is very important to be treated as a person and be remembered and not just someone calling into a call center and depersonalize everything. This is what VT did with Economic Services and it is VERY frustrating to be misunderstood because of the lack of human contact. I have had nothing but I'll to say about how that system is run now! I feel it is very important, particularly in this high tech age in which we live not to loose sight of people and a smile when someone is in need. This is what makes VT the state it is with human connection. I feel it would be a detriment to all if this system was changed. Thank you.

4/14/11 10:05PM

I feel that model one is the most sufficient for working parents, as well as parents looking for work. Having a local office is beneficial to the community, because it is nice to go in and talk to a person, especially if one has a question. One does not have to deal with high call frequency which leads to being on hold for periods of time that one does not have. Where as going to a local office and dropping the needed paperwork off or picking it up is easier/quicker for parents on a tight time schedule. I am a working single mother of two children, a 9-year-old and 7-month-old, and we have a busy schedule. In addition, sometimes I forget about renewal dates and I will get the reminder notice from the local office. Having the local office here is great because it allows me to not be late with my paperwork and the subsidy benefits do not end. Then I would have to take time off of work that I can not afford to do, until my subsidy was renewed. Or I would have to pay out of pocket to the daycare and then get reimbursed once the subsidy is active. I for one do not have extra money to pay a full daycare bill upfront and then get the refund a week or two later. Thank You



4/14/11 10:00PM

I strongly support the Community based model. We have had several complicated issues to deal with following the adoption of special needs children. The support and direct help we received from our local office was essential in getting through the paperwork. I don't see how we could of completed this with an automated system or over the phone. Plus, the local folks know the child care programs and service providers who are involved, and the child care center has a good working relationship with Child Care Resource. This really helps when the center is waiting for payment while forms are completed. You may contact me for further information. Barbara Merrill

4/14/11 9:53PM

Model # 1, seems to best suite to community & the way it runs now is a great help to all families through the state of Vermont.

4/14/11 9:14PM

I work with childcare providers and many parents who utilize child care subsidy. Centralizing the service will mean delays and difficulties getting important questions answered. This will likely result in lost work and lost wages for parents as they are unable to afford their childcare expenses, loss of productivity, and state tax revenue. It is important to keep the subsidy program local and accessible to all parents and providers. We have already run into difficulties in our program as we rely on child care subsidy verification to help families be elligible for our program. We have been told that the centralized workers won't have time to give us this information which will severly impact our ability to serve needy families.

4/14/11 8:52PM

Simply put, the community-based model keeps the personal communication and connection with case managers that is critical to working successfully with the families we serve. The system is complex and this component is vital to serving clients successfully.

4/14/11 8:08PM

ive called left voice messages and emails since january but none have been returnedthis seems to be an issue i feel need to be corrected to better help and serve the caregivers as well as the children

4/14/11 7:29AM

I like the Hybrid Model (choice #3) unless this means dismantling Childcare Resource Center. CCRC is INVALUABLE.) The text choices were very confusing to read (and I have a Master's degree!) What is CDD and what is BFIS?? I worry that many mainstream, educated and less educated community members will find the choice descriptions too confusing. . One of my main concerns is that there are local agency representatives who can assist community members in

securing childcare. I work for a non-profit representing hundreds of non-native speakers of English. I didn't see anything in the models that specifically spoke to anything that is being done to help Somali, Iraqi, Burundi, Nepali/ Bhutanese, Burmese, etc. community members. It is a huge challenge to help these new community members to navigate the childcare system. It's challenging for me as a single parent of a special needs child, as well, and I am a native speaker of English. I could not have survived my child's younger years and needs had it not been for the amazing people at Childcare Resource in Williston.

4/14/11 5:32AM

i believe that we need a place to go when we need help not everyone has internet or a phone. we are consider low income because we dont have the money to afford these things i think you need to take into consideration that most people like to talk to someone in person rather then over the phone its easier to meet our needs as a childcare provider and i also have children in daycare. thank you for your time.

4/14/11 5:21AM

Community based model is the best option for many reasons -we know it works! -we know who we are talking to and have relationships with community based agencies -keep the work in the community where we know the unique needs of our community -Who will assist parents with technical in person help who do not have access to transportation and computers -There is concern for sure about the low number of people that will be handling the number of cases! I vote for Model #1 Keep FAP in the community based agencies

4/14/11 4:59AM

At this time when parents and providers are economically stressed beyond capacity it might not be the time to create a new system for subsidies. The last time a new system (BFIS) was created it took three years for the system to begin to work smoothly. Can we afford three years more of stress on top of what we have now? Will this stress seriously affect the early childhood infrastructure? Many providers now have a fragile infrastructure which late subsidy payments, parent problems with subsidy, and parent eligibility issues will jeopardize. It might be best to tell each region what they need to save (cut) and let us figure out where to do this.

4/14/11 4:59AM

It is my beleif that if this service is centralized, many families will have difficulty accessing the benefit. They will then loose their child care financial assistance and thus loose their job and/or their education benefit which this program supports. The success of parents accessing this program is vital to keeping them at work and so is a support to Vermont's economy! Many vulnerable families use trac phones with limited minutes. Many do not have access to computers. I have heard it said in this community that indeed centralization will help to save money because families will be unable to access the benefit and "fall off the grid." While I believe that people will loose the benefit due to difficulty of access, I do not believe that the Agency or the Division are using this centralization as a cost saving tool in that way. Though it

may indeed save money in this program while driving up the cost of unemployment -if parents can navigate that system.

4/14/11 4:15AM

With so many state agencies transitioning to state-wide models, it would appear that it is inevitable that CC FAP should do so as well. However, in my experience this model only serves to depersonalize those in need, and create greater obstacles for all involved, with little efficiencies realized. The idea that there will be greater uniformity also seems false as every family's needs are different, and generalizations usually leads to marginalizations. Therefore, my recommendation is option Model #1: The Community Based Model, as it is the most humane option available.

4/14/11 4:15AM

The current model best serves Vermont parents, especially those with low to moderate incomes. It provides local access and personalized service. Many families do not have access to a computer to navigate a system on line. Stay local and value relationships to provide stability to families.

4/14/11 3:53AM

The model that I would be most interested in would be Model #1. I feel strongly about this as it keeps it in the Community. I feel that this is very important. I like the idea that you can actually sit down and talk to a person or pick the phone up and actually get a person to talk to. NOT a system, which can give out information on specific items and only the specific items that it is programmed to do, but is not always the information that is needed and is not able to answer questions. Person to person communication is lost in this day of technology. In some ways technology is very beneficial and in others it is a detriment. In this case, I believe that the person to person communication and meetings are important to keep and having this community access is advantageous. Thank you.

4/14/11 3:42AM

I prefer model #1 Community Based and feel that it is the most helpful to both parents and service providers. I have found the current set up to be very helpful and the parents who have been referred have expressed the same satisfaction with ease of getting help, information and answers to questions on billing and eligibility.

4/14/11 3:36AM

In regards to Model #2A and 2B, The Benefits Service Center will this be a # for families to call or will there be a designated person there to assist families with any questions or concerns? In all models, will a family be able to call up the same person they spoke to two weeks ago?, because speaking from personal experience when I have called the 1800 number for ESD, you do not get the same person you spoke to earlier, I called three times within an hour and a half and spoke to three different people and had to tell my story over to all three( as I guess there is

no place to see notes, go figure). It would be great if a family could call the same person every time.

4/14/11 3:32AM

Option 1, the communtiy based model seems to work best...

4/14/11 3:17AM

i attended themeeeting in newport april 4th @ the career center, i like how we all interacted with other town. i still beleive in having someone at the commmunity so if we do have any questions they are there to help us n the parents. i don't think its our responiabile to do the paperwork ect. please consider this comment but i also support ccfap in whatever they do. i have always been happy withthe service!!!! thank you denise robert----newport

4/14/11 3:03AM

You need to keep the local Childcare Resource Center as a provider I can't tell you the times I have stopped in to ask a question or get help on how to deal with an issue or pick up paperwork or submit paperwork . It is so reasurring having a loca office . I think if many more changes happen that effect us providers you are going to see this business deminish or people not qualified to do this do it just for the income or have people do it illegal with not licence or registration . Please stop trying to improve all aspects and keep the human interaction the same . Sometimes change end up hurting in the long run . Please give this serious consideration before you downsize jobs . those jobs are connected to lives that need to make a living .

4/14/11 3:00AM

In my experience as a center director for 15 years, case managers are always overworked and behind in the caseload. Cutting personnel and/or centralizing the processing will only exacerbate this problem. As it is now, providers are required to wait over 3 weeks from initially providing care to receiving subsidy payment from the state for that care. And that is if all paperwork is correctly completed and filed by parents. If not, providers can wait much longer for payment. Waiting for payment is very detrimental to small businesses and, thus, many small centers do not accept subsidy families. Center directors are strapped for time as it is. We do not have the time to help parents complete the required documentation for subsidy. Additionally, there are many, many unique family situations and considerations. Having a consistent, accessible case manager helps families feel more comfortable and enables the needs of each individual to be addressed. I feel centralization will be detrimental to the process.

4/14/11 2:35AM

I have been a provider for the past 20 years. I find it is harder and harder for single family 's to pay for their child care over the past few years. It would be nice of something was done to help these family's.

4/14/11 1:53AM

As a parent and former user of subsidy services, I can say without hesitation that CDD should leave well enough alone. I want one place to go to for all of my child care needs. I want a relationship with that person so I can be comfortable sharing my personal business. When things get messy, I want a place where I can walk in and explain my situation and know I've been heard. What I don't want is multiple people dealing with my case. I don't want to re-share my story multiple times with different people. I don't want e-mail and voicemail to be my only choices for communication. Subsidy works in the community, please leave it alone!

4/14/11 1:31AM

I think the third option is best because it provides one-on-one support for parents trying to navigate the system. I am concerned about homeless families and how they can access these support systems. They often don't have cars or access to computers or even phones. Different parts of the DCF should be talking to each other about services. We had a family in our care last fall that was losing subsidy for care (probably the only stability these two children had) when there was an investigation for abuse with a boyfriend of the Mom. She ended up having to move to a hotel room because the shelter was full with four children six and under. This Mom didn't have the wherewithal to access services that this family really needed. I hope that DCF really gets how desperate some of these children are for help and can make sure they get it.

4/14/11 1:23AM

Keep the way it currently is.

4/14/11 1:04AM

I think having the central location in Waterbury will be very hard for many parents to get there if they have questions or problems with the application. To help parents, I would like to see a few localized places that will do the same as what would be done in Waterbury. As a provider, I see many parents struggle with the application and the wording of their coverage. Wording that tells them the coverage is 100% is not accurate. The wording should be we will coverage this much (give amount) and you as a parent are responsible for the difference according to what your provider will accept. Do you that all parents have access to online and know how to use a computer? If not, then it is important to have people available to help parents fill out the form. What about people from other countries that don't speak English or very limited English? Who will help them?

4/14/11 1:00AM

I have had great Services for the last couple years with the Child Care Resources. I like the fact they are local and do a great job.

4/14/11 12:59AM

I am no longer accepting subsidy. to me it is a cut in my income and some parents unfortunately can't afford the difference with the cost of food and everything going I can,t afford to take subsidy.And I am not interested in the food program home made meals it to hard to plan. sorry

4/14/11 12:58AM

I believe having local community support workers for families is extremely important. I would suggest Model #1 or possibly #3.

4/14/11 12:51AM

I do not think it would be beneficial for parents to lose their connections with local CCR. They provide an invaluable, personalized service for our community. I like having the same case manager, not only for consistency, but also someone who understands my family situation and can offer the best options for my children. A "call center" approach would not work well when you're dealing with situations that need personal attention. I like knowing I can walk into CCR and speak to someone directly & have my questions answered by my case worker. I like being treated as a person, not a number.

4/14/11 12:48AM

I attended the information session last week, and it was difficult to provide feedback on the models without having specific information about how they meet the criteria, for example, the cost criteria which I assume will be a driving factor behind the decision. That said, if the decision is made to implement some sort of centralization, it's critical that you have a well thought out transition and communication plan. It was clear from comments made at the information session that providers from the communities that currently have a hybrid model in place were not aware of the local supports still available to them. I recommend that if centralization is to occur that you consider a phased implementation. By this I mean that you target certain areas to transition first, only moving to others once the initial sites are up and running smoothly. You might want to commit to the hybrid models in certain areas or for a certain period of time to help ease the transition. I know this might cost more in the short-run but it might save in the long-run by providing some level of local support until everyone is used to the new system. A communication plan also must be part of any transition. It is critical that all parties involved understand the new system. While providers can help spread the word to parents, it's not realistic to assume that they can be the primary source of information for parents. Lastly, I think that the technology changes that are underway are going to be critical if you are considering centralization. You might want to consider keeping some of the local supports in place (hybrid model) until the technology changes are up and running. As I said at the meeting, the Y would be happy to be a test site for upcoming technology changes as we use the system a lot and understand how much it can help or hinder the process. Thank you for considering this input. Please contact me if you have any questions. Luanne Cantor, Greater Burlington YMCA, 802-862-8993 x135.

4/14/11 12:48AM

I like option 1 or 3 - I think the community based resources are incredibly helpful and easy to work with. (Ex,- childcare resources.) I am someone who is not eligible for other ESD services but just wanted better information on child care referrals. I'm afraid someone like me would get ignored/lost in the system since I am not eligible or in need for other services

4/14/11 12:41AM

I still believe model number 1 would work the best for our community. I feel parents need the person to person support when having a difficult time and asking for help. As a provider I am concerned about the families not getting things completed in a timely manner and them losing daycare spots because of lag time. Due to the economy providers can not carry large balances of money due . thank you for taking my comment. Darlene Lockwood

4/14/11 12:33AM

IF model 1 keeps the service local so that many parents can access the place via bus service that is great. To do applications online for many parents is hard. Some parents have limited English and for them help is needed to navigate the application. I strongly encourage local access (within our community).

4/14/11 12:27AM

I really think the communities get better and more consistent services with a centralized model. I like the oversight that each employee will have under this model much better than having each community determine things on their own. I have found services to be different based on what county a person lives in and I do not find that fair.

4/14/11 12:05AM

From Sarah Tilden, CCFAP Eligibility Specialist in SDO: As an eligibility specialist for the past five years, I have always felt that many aspects of my position would be much easier if communication/shared information was more accessible from ESD. Since eligibility guidelines are similar to those of other benefit programs, many of the applications we receive are from families that also receive food stamps or Medicaid benefits. Frequently, when I request verification of their income and/or benefits, their response is "I just submitted that [to ESD], can't you get it from them?" It would be ideal if I could say "yes" to that, but as things currently are, I can't. I would also like to say that on the occasions (rare) that all necessary pieces of an application are submitted in a timely manner, determining eligibility is not the bulk of my job. The bulk of my time is spent "helping" families locate and submitting all the necessary pieces and helping them find quality child care - encouraging/educating them on all aspects of the process (i.e. navigation). Much of the conversation I have heard (from the policy makers) about this issue is that "many families can learn/use/navigate a modernized system and for those families that need extra help, they can be assisted by a community partner" but in reality, out of every ten applications I process, there is only one that comes in "complete," resulting in quick turn-around. That means only 10% can handle reading the fine print and submitting a complete application and 90% need extra assistance and these aren't necessarily new applications; even families that are renewing for the 3rd or 4th time need to be reminded of all the required

documentation and are sent multiple requests for verification. I fear that decision and policy makers think that eligibility determination is the bulk of the time/cost factor and by removing it from local agencies and streamlining it, while continuing to fund - on a smaller level - the "navigation services," that the system will work and money will be saved - but from someone who is in the trenches, I can tell you that the bulk of the work is in navigation and that the eligibility determination is pretty straight forward-when all the information is available. The CCFA program is more about equalizing the playing field for struggling families (i.e. navigation) and much less about determining their income/eligibility for the program. If funding is cut so severely that community agencies can't provide the navigation services to meet the demand, everyone loses. We need to keep the \*Human\* in Human Services Programs. Thanks for considering my thoughts. - Sarah

4/14/11 12:05AM

I personally see a huge gap in financial assistance for childcare. My husband and I recently had a baby in September 2010 and started her in a daycare January 2011. We do not meet requirements to receive financial assistance because together we make more than the minimum. In the process of looking for a daycare ourselves and other families in our situation are made to "settle" based on a daycare we can afford. I searched numerous daycare's in the area. In my search I found the average full time quality daycare is around \$200-250 week. In my option the middle class is being left out. If you are considered lower class you receive assistance and the higher class has no problem paying the \$200-250 week. The middle class is being forced to struggle and being "punished" for being full time tax paying employees.

4/14/11 12:04AM

please Dont centerlize child care resources,, we need the staff . I would rather deal with a person than with a machine.

4/14/11 12:03AM

I think that parents who have been sitting around and have no jobs and dont prove themselvs worthy of this assistance shouldnt get it so there kids can go to day care on the state and they get to hang out and sleep run around and have friends over and no responsiablites?? i work pt and attend college mid time 9 credits 5 days a week. i need this help. i dont sit around or pretend to look for work, i am a soul worker, with school and my job, i give my best my all. please dont take this bennifit away from them who do so good and desirvie it. thanks amy

4/14/11 12:02AM

Hi there - I would like to suggest a modification to the Hybrid - for large population areas have central and local - for more rural areas we could probably do well with only central and CDD referring people to local CIS teams should they be complicated

4/14/11 12:01AM



My choice would be this Model #1: Community Based Model We need to keep a strong community presence. We do not want to be the “middle man.” This model provides child care referrals to all families in the community (receiving subsidy or not), keeping the two services together housed in one location. The same with the community agencies offering resource development opportunities to all child care providers in the community - providers are comfortable and use to working with staff in these agencies, and feel comfortable contacting them with concerns or questions, or asking for assistance, in all aspects of child care. Referrals and subsidy authorizations many times need to happen in a timely manner, sometimes immediate, and in many cases specialists work directly with families, and this is the only way it would make the connection as soon as needed. If a parent needs to find child care, or needs to know that they are eligible for subsidy before they can either place their child in child care, or start a job, they have to have answers and directions sooner than later! This is the best model that will keep the connection between a parent and a child care provider, which if not immediate, in many cases would put parent’s child care in jeopardy. Having the service accessible to families in person, by telephone, fax and through email is convenient for families. Many know their case workers and call them directly or come in to talk confidentially with them. We have a relationship with Child care providers by assisting them in solving problems, answering questions, and navigating the system. Child Care Providers trust that we are doing everything to make things easier for them. And we are, so they will continue to provide child care to families that are receiving state assistance. Technological improvements which will enhance time and cost efficiency should be considered...but not change the way services are delivered. We need to keep the system easy to navigate for the population that has special needs, with a presence easily accessible in their community. Families have enough to deal with in these tough economic times, and losing their child care, which might result in losing their jobs and family income, and receiving total state assistance is not a solution for saving the state money. Please, help support families and providers across Vermont, and keep a community presence for subsidy determination.

4/13/11 11:58PM

In Lamoille Valley we have seen what the impact centralizing has done. Just since February it has been very difficult to do any subsidy work. There has not been consistency, it is difficult to get answers and talk to someone. It has been very stressful on me as a provider and has taken much needed time away from what I should be doing. I can't even imagine how difficult it has been for parents when things aren't within reach and or added support. Please bring subsidy back to a local level. When working with children we need to have a close knit family. It is critical with all the cuts happening.

4/13/11 11:33PM

I love the 2B model where financial eligibility is determined in a one stop shop when applying for other benefits. This makes sense so that families do not have to go to different locations and fill out additional paperwork. I think this model could also pass on the bright futures website to families they may be interested in researching their own childcare needs.

4/13/11 11:28PM

I feel that community based is better both for parents and for providers. For the parents it would be much easier to have someone they can go to when there are issues and for those that are not comfortable using computers (or lack the availability). As a provider, it also would be easier to call a local agency with questions. I also feel that it loses the personal feeling without a community based model, again, for both providers and parents. When I call the agency they know who I am talking about and are able to help, when the parents call they are able to get help sooner. A lot of the parents that I work with are low income or specialized care, they tend to need a lot of hand holding and with out the community based model, they may not be as apt to get things done in a timely manner both affecting their subsidy and availability of child care.

4/13/11 11:11PM

As the director of a school age care site located in a public school I have been frustrated with the application process for families and I would welcome the model which includes the following: The Centralized Model, ESD Integrated, takes the structure proposed in the CDD Specialized model and integrates the application for the CCFAP with the larger package of potential benefits programs for families. A single application allows families to apply for all the benefits they are interested in and the eligibility determination is made by an integrated benefits worker. For a long time I have thought that if a family has already qualified for something like Dr. Dynasaur or Free/Reduced lunch they should automatically qualify for Child Care Subsidy for school age care. I also think that subsidy payments for attendance at a licensed after school program should not be linked only to parent service need but also to the need for children without special needs who are not in a crisis situation for a safe and stimulating environment during out of school time hours.

4/13/11 11:04PM

Model 1 seems to work the best, as having an easily accessible, community based center is really the most hands on for parents, centers, and providers. Also, there should be ways for legally exempt providers to show that they are providing quality for the families they serve. For example, it was difficult for me to pursue registration in the first years of living in our newly purchased home, and while my youngest was an infant. But I have served several families over that time (never more than 2 at a time). And I provide a high quality program, one that is different from many registered homes or centers as it is outdoor/nature/place based with an emergent curriculum. I have a BA in environmental studies, with extensive course work in education, and experience in early childhood that goes back to 1993, spanning floater/sub, teacher, director, board member, parent, volunteer, and lead teacher. I provide and document a quality program, but subsidy only pays a minute amount of the cost of running such a program. Subsidy should reflect quality check points, not type of care. And quality should be based on program, experience, and product of care, not just type of housing. "Quality" should also reflect what parents seek, as many natural/alternative parents are seeking models of care that reflect their morals/ethics, not bleached, sanitized, risk-free, pre-packaged learning.

4/13/11 10:54PM

We could potentially loose a lot of child care providers if the CCFAP is centralized. Many providers are already frustrated with the system and having to direct their numerous phone calls

to Waterbury where they may or may not reach someone right away would exacerbate this. Families would not be able to accelerate the process of applying for CCFA, which is often needed on an immediate basis, by dropping their application off at a local agency.

4/13/11 10:21PM

I was saddened to see that one of the research criteria that I believe is critical was relegated to discussion purposes only. I strongly believe that the CCFAP service delivery model should include holistic services that are grouped in a way that makes sense to families and child care providers. The community based model does this the best with its referral, resource development, CCFAP, and CIS specialized child care services housed under one roof. Families, child care providers, and community partners are familiar with this model, and they have established strong, long standing, and effective relationships within it that ultimately serve to better the lives of children in VT.

4/13/11 10:02PM

I have found it extremely frustrating that the current model does not look closely enough at families who do not receive assistance from the state in an other form except for childcare subsidy. My family has had to apply for family support because of this and we wait every 6 mths to see how this will impact our overall household and major changes are being made for us without being able to control this element. So my suggestions are this how is section 8, fuel assistance, out of pocket insurance cost and general assistance taken into account. For instance as I said we get none of these benefits. Our household income is just barely over 2000. Our rent is 1,100. Fuel 330. a month on a budget plan, Electricity is 150.00 Car insurance is 110. Phone 90.00. My children receive Dr. Dynosaur but my husband and I pay 250.00 for separate health insurance plans. He has a 6,000. deductible to meet before he even gets coverage. He goes to cognitive therapy once a week at 100.00 and I can afford to go to my therapist because my insurance doesn't approve it. And to add more numbers to this we have three children one in childcare at 232.00 a week. Two children in school with lunch costs at 25.00 a week combined. I am an early childhood educator currently in school. My time spent in teaching reflected the magnitude of these numbers in that if I am working I have to pay 100% of the childcare cost for my child, with gas to get back and forth from work I was in negative numbers by the time I paid for childcare and went to work every week. The pay also disabled me from having any health insurance from work because to cover just me it was 800 a month with a 5,000. dollar deductible. How does this make sense. I suggest that the standards for subsidy be revised to look at the overall financial aspects of families in need of quality early childcare/education for their children. As a state we are not helping but hurting middle class families so they can continue to work. Subsidy plays too big of a role in creating barriers for my families success!

4/13/11 9:55PM

My daughter is a single mother, working full time and trying to pay her way. She makes between \$3.00 and \$4.00 over min. wage. Because she is responsible and after almost 3 years on her job, trying to get ahead just seems to be a vicious cycle. the more she earns the less financial child care assistance she is eligible for. I am a registered Daycare provider and it breaks my heart for these young single moms that try to get ahead. It seems like a slap in the face. Many

families that dont work and are on work programs or monthly state assistance, get their child care paid on full. I definately feel that the eligibility for assistance needs to be raised. Thank You, Donna Cahoon

4/13/11 9:47PM

I strongly support the community based model . I realize that technology can be helpful in streamlining the financial assitance process, and that this model will meet the needs of some of the population being served. I would also stress how many people need resources and in-person support easily accessible in their communities to address individual needs that can be multi-layered and complex, often too complex to address in an on-line application or a call service. I am concerned that familly and community needs will not be met in a personal and timely fashion through any of the other models. The risk cannot be taken that payments will not be made in a timely fashion, this puts family and providers at risk in what are already tough economic times. We know that the current model works and has for the past 14 years. Why would we take a risk with a vulnerable population on something that may not work , has the potential to be understaffed, will not suffiently meet the needs of all families, places more of a burden on child care providers and will likely not be more cost-effective in the long run? Thank you for the opportunity for input.

4/13/11 9:46PM

I strongly support Model #1. In order to best serve our communities we need to keep services in the communities not make them centrally located by phone or email only. Many families do not have access to phones or internet and therefore you would be making the CCFA program inaccessible to many who would benefit for the service. It is extremely important for some families to be able to "put a face to the name" and they are able to do that now. Have you ever been on the phone trying to get some information and just not having any luck and thinking that if you could do this in person it would be much easier? Changing the current way this service is being delivered is NOT in the best interest of the children and families that we work with. It certainly does not contribute to the feeling of community. Thank you for your time.

4/13/11 9:40PM

I was at the VIT presentation on 4/4 and I heard providers share the same concerns that our partners shared when we (Family Services) implemented Centralized Intake. I think with a carefully planned strategy and the proper resources CDD can adequately address the concerns raised and implement model 2A with a transition to 2B or model 3 (I would not suggest that 2B be the first model). Our centralized intake is more like model 3 with the intake and acceptance of child abuse allegations done centrally and the response, support, resource and referral carried out by the local distruct office. Success in models 2A, 2B or 3 could be realized if the folowing issues are addressed and resourced: relationships with families and providers; excellent customer service, effective and efficient processing of applications, payments, ect; knowledge of local resources; and improvements in technology. While we still get a few complaints about our centralized intake program (mostly due to the phone system and wait times) people have come to accept this as the way we do business and we feel like we have attained our main goals. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important work. Sheila Duranleau

4/13/11 9:29PM

I strongly support the model that leaves the CCFAP in the community agency. I have seen the subsidy system from several different perspectives-- as a parent, a childcare provider, and a person supporting families who need help finding and paying for childcare. As a parent, finding and paying for childcare can be a complex issue. It is also extremely time-sensitive. While looking for childcare for my own child, I needed to find out what subsidy amount I would qualify for before enrolling my child. I also knew that spaces in quality programs were rarely available and quickly filled. The subsidy specialist responded quickly and was able to help me figure out what I would qualify for. She was also able to speak with the program I was looking at, and because they had spoken with her they were willing to hold the spot for me and work out an arrangement for the deposit. Had that not happened, it is quite likely I would have lost the spot to another family while I got the paperwork and documentation submitted and waited for the certificate to be processed. It is hard for me to imagine that the system could work as efficiently and effectively with far fewer specialists, without a connection to the community, or with benefit specialists who only do subsidy as a small part of their job. As a childcare provider, it could be challenging to run a small business on the meager subsidy amounts that the state paid home providers. If there was a delay in processing payments, it could cause an extreme hardship for my program. It was also challenging to collect co-payments from some families, but the support of the specialists in the community agency helped me to better help the parents in the program ensure they were getting the help they qualified for, gave me the support to work with families with special circumstances, and helped work through glitches in the system. If I ever had a question, the subsidy specialists in the community agency were quick to find the root of the problem and help me to solve it. Anyone who believes this job can be done as well by a fewer number of specialists clearly has no idea how much work they each do and the high level of service and responsiveness the parents and childcare providers have come to expect in our community. Now I have a job supporting families who rely on the state for support... Reading the description of the various models it is hard for me to imagine some of these families navigating the system on their own or taking the time to wait and wait for answers or help. In many cases it is ridiculous to think that these families could access an online application or even an automated phone system, either because they don't have access to a phone, they don't speak enough English, or they simply don't understand the system. There are SO FEW places that families who are struggling can get personal, individual, caring assistance to access help. For some struggling families, the subsidy specialist is the first person "in the system" who has taken the time to really listen to them and try to help them through a challenging process or a difficult time. Because the specialists are in the community and they are developing a connection with the family, they can connect them to other community resources to help them with their other needs. At times the subsidy specialists notice a community need or lacking resource and can connect with others within their agency or in other community agencies to find new ways to support the families in their community. These things simply would not happen if they were applying online or over the phone to someone in a centralized office. I absolutely think the CCFAP specialists at the community agencies should be given the tools and technology to do their jobs more efficiently and with less duplication. Over time, the introduction of new technology and efficiencies in the system might allow the communities to reduce the number of specialists. As a consumer and support person I wholeheartedly share the desire for families to have less paperwork to fill out and fewer times they have to provide the same documentation.

However, I cannot support the idea that CCFAP specialists are simply bankers processing financial transactions, nor the implication that they are working so inefficiently that their job could be accomplished by far fewer people. The work that they do that takes more manpower is the HUMAN SERVICES part of their job, and it would be an enormous disservice to take that piece away from families in need of support.

4/13/11 9:12PM

I truly do not envision a 'new' model saving anyone money, especially child care providers. With the loss of our local subsidy specialists I can only imagine how any challenges will be addressed. I am seriously concerned that there will be a trickle down even if the centralization model is set up correctly: if parents can't navigate the system payments won't be paid; if payments aren't paid child care providers lose money, lose families and potentially lose their business. Is anyone thinking about the impact on those who do not have a voice: children?! Is this a risk the State is willing to take at the same time they state they want to increase 'quality' childcare slots? Quality child care requires an investment, it doesn't just happen because it's needed. You cannot remove supports [local presence] and expect providers to take up the slack. Their jobs already require them to work well beyond the hours of most full-time employees in other fields. This expectation shows a serious lack of understanding on the State's part of child care as a profession. Adding more expectations without time or training is ridiculous. It is a grave error to make cuts that impact the most needy. And it is a grave error to expect child care providers to subsidize the costs of childcare. It is time to take the blinders off and think about the potential impact of these cuts [because we all know this is less about efficiency and more about the bottom dollar] on the future of our children. We will end up paying more in the end when families can't work, childcare businesses fold and many children who need childcare to stabilize their lives will be at risk.

4/13/11 10:03AM

I am concerned with losing the local specialists. Some parents can navigate CC FAP on-line but there are many who need additional support. They may not have computer access. They may not have a phone or phone minutes to spare, particularly if they need assistance and find themselves on hold or talking with someone via phone for a lengthy time. Who will help parents with specific challenges? Will this be left to child care providers? Despite years of fighting for respect as the professionals they are, this reflects the reality that even the State doesn't see this career as a profession that is worthy of respect. If they did they would have at very least taken the time to inform providers of these upcoming changes and asked for their input

4/13/11 9:41AM

I strongly support the community model and I think if there had been an appropriate gathering of input and knowledge from all DIRECTLY involved in the subsidy system...community agency workers, child care providers, and most especially, parents... all of us TOGETHER could have contributed to creating a model that could satisfy the strong need for a community presence for parents and providers who use the system, along with making it more cost effective so that the need to reduce expenses could also be addressed. While I recognize how helpful technology can be in streamlining the subsidy process, and that this can work for some people, I also cannot

stress enough how many people need an in-person presence easily accessible in their communities to address individual needs that can be multi-layered and complex... too complex to address in an on-line application or a impersonal call service. I think that the Hybrid model would "muddy the waters" and most importantly would take away from the effectiveness of the Community Specialists who know their clients, can prioritize their needs according to that knowledge and be able to answer questions, and help them with their specific needs, and provider them with information more or less immediately... not just be the "middle man" who takes in questions but cannot give timely information..... When CDD distributed the subsidy contract to the regional agencies back in 1997, they let it be known that they were doing this to make it easier for those who used the system to access a community presence... to make the system more "user-friendly" and able to address provider and parent concerns in a more personal and timely fashion..... Fourteen years later, the need for this community presence is even stronger as families struggle in these challenging economic times. Thank you for giving us the chance to offer our input.. I hope that the word is getting out to parents and providers in an effective way so that all voices can be heard.

4/13/11 3:15AM

It seems to me that there is a little of throwing the baby out with the bath water (literally and figuratively) in the rush to save some money. Communities that have worked diligently over the last 15 years to build the relationships among local agencies and with families are at risk of losing these most vulnerable families to a central call center that neither knows the families or understands the local dynamics and culture. Has the committee explored other options of cost savings within the current structure? To really effectively manage these cases no one should be working with more than 400 files no matter what. The vulnerable families communities work with do not always have access to unlimited phone time or computers to make a call center a viable option for many. I hope the state will listen to the comments that were shared at the VIT presentation and put the needs of families first.

4/11/11 9:19PM

I have numerous comments regarding the models and process as to how this has proceeded. Many are of concern for families and providers. First, why are we now trying to figure out if moving the CCFAP out of local districts is a good idea? I ask this because the budget was cut with this assumption without having walked through the various "research questions" nor gleaming community, parent, and agency input. This process has yeilded a no confidence voice from many who work directly with the families served by this program throughout the state. It is a shame, once again, that CDD has choosen to rush into a major program change without first taking the time and consulting with others to develop a well thoughtout plan. In review of these models, I wonder if our local Family Service office is even aware that they are being considered a potential site to assist families as prosed by Model #2A. Do they have the training, staffing and computer capabilities to handle this community need? It is my understanding that FS is currently overwhelmed with their own caseloads and budgets that have been cut. Have parents been surveyed to see how well it will work for them to have access to CCFAP program via telephone or e-mail. This process has not worked as planned for ESD, so why does CDD feel they have solved the problems of access, literacy challenges both written and technology, as well as the "track" phone complications. In both districts that have given their files to WB,

providers have numerous concerns regarding turn-around time of applications, payment and access to reliable information when dealing with CDD.. The projected case load of 700 per specialist is foolish, to say the least, and the one person in WB handling this case load is actually getting assistance, so the 1 to 700 is not accurate, but misleading. How much money will it cost to upgrade the technology needed for this transfer, plus set up the community access sites? Is that in the current budget amount of \$515, 654? Or has that too not been fully reviewed so an accurate cost is known? We no longer have an ESD office open to the public, so how will clients seeking support for CCFAP get access to local people? In the end, this is another example of the divisions rush to alter a program without having taken the time BEFORE now to be asking if this is a good idea or not. Had CDD come to the agencies and proposed the problem of needing to find budget savings, I am sure all twelve districts would have been able to accommodate savings while keeping in mind quality of service to families. We can be trusted to be part of the process. We can be trusted to have insight to know the various details of providing direct service. It is my hope that is a learning curve for CDD. They have some good folks there, but get ego out of the way when dealing with our most vulnerable children and their families.

4/7/11 11:30PM

as an owner of a 5 star licensed children's center for ages 6 weeks to 12 years, The biggest complaint I have about subsidy: a parent walks in, wants to do business because they are starting a job, they have no money for deposit, in order to keep the job, we need to provide care, in most cases they are approved, however, the approval can take weeks, and in some cases months, and back pay is not always paid. (usually only 2 weeks) Communication between the family place, and the new customer doesn't seem to be at its best, if they are missing paper work etc, and they refuse to let the provider know, of the status of their application. Leaves the provider with a tough choice, to give care or not. I find this frustrating, while we hold a spot to wait indefinitely for approval on an application. I think the approval process should be made within the week it is submitted, to be fair for the provider and the client. I read all the proposals, and all of them have good points, I guess it will be trial by fire which one works the best, or which one ultimately we are going to be working with., I think there is some measure of common sense and perhaps less paperwork, if someone is eligible for food stamps, heating assistance etc, only stands to reason they need help with childcare as well, let them be approved for all services at once, and they use what they need.

4/6/11 8:52AM

It has been mentioned that the CCFAP costs 1.1m and delivers 37m in benefits, an approx. 3% overhead cost. I am curious what the overhead and delivery of other program costs are for comparison? Is that information available anywhere or able to be posted on the website? Do other programs cost less than 3% and is it reasonable to expect to cut the delivery cost to less than 2% when "modernizing and increasing access" (as projected) may increase the demand for benefits (as seen when ESD modernized and apparently wasn't prepared for the increase in applications over the past year). The figures put forth in the Overview (under Customers) indicate that there are a potential 22,000 income-eligible children, with less than half that number currently eligible/enrolled and even less actually using the benefit (?). I question whether or not our intent is to keep the numbers low or to invest in our at-risk children and their



families by identifying them and giving them access to high-quality programs. Centralizing and streamlining the process seems to support the first option, rather than the latter. Families that meet the 200% FPL should all be considered at-risk when we think about human capital and the potential to invest in our future at the most cost-effective level. Directing these families to an automated, take-a-number system is not the best approach.

4/6/11 3:32AM

As a provider using the system, I hope with the upcoming technology improvements, I will be able to navigate the system to find my current financial agreement rate along with how many vacation days my children have used and how many vacation days I have used. All being important information to the provider to run her business.

4/6/11 12:24AM

I was a participant in last night's VIT presentation. Although agencies that are currently piloting the Hybrid model had high praise, we can't ignore the fact that childcare providers from those regions feel the complete opposite. They cited lack of support, late payments and numerous days to even get a return phone call from Waterbury(if they were returned at all). Over and over we heard repeated the importance of relationship building - do we really want to take away that "lifeline" for both the families and childcare providers that we serve?

4/6/11 12:21AM

As a child care provider I am concerned about not having someone in my community who knows my program and the families I serve. I am strongly in favor of Model# 1. Models # 2A and 2B will mean a significant number of my hours will be on the telephone. Now I can talk to my local subsidy person during nap time, get my questions answered and not take time away from the kids in my program. Model #3 seems to mean that I can get help locally but no real answers. Why are we trying to fix something that works really well?

4/5/11 9:25PM

I advocate strongly for a community based or hybrid model of CCFAP eligibility determination. As an executive director of a community organization serving our neediest families; a relationship with a specialist is critical for our families - both English and non-English speaking. Many poor families simply do not have the tech savvy/education or on-line resources available to navigate a call center or on-line application process. Further, to expect a host of community organizations to take on this function is short sighted at best. Our organization is stretched to say the least and we already provide myriad supports for our families to complete applications - translation services, photocopies, postage - hand holding etc. I am all for streamlining and improving efficiencies ,but thus far, the centralization model for other benefits has proved difficult for our families. It is confusing that our state is actively pursuing outsourcing other safety net services (GA) among community providers, yet wants to pull back CCFAP. Child care assistance - financial as well as resource and referral is one of the most stressful and important steps for any family. An informed, well-trained and caring specialist makes all the

difference - both for the family and child care provider. Thank you for your consideration.  
Vicky Smith Executive Director King Street Center Burlington  
4/5/11 2:15AM

I am in support of the hybrid model - Reason being: as a center director I currently see a need for actual face to face assistance for completing the needed applications (which are lengthy) and barriers to this happening already (transportation, technology, literacy challenges of families) - if you remove this option a number of families will fall through the cracks. I support the hybrid model vs. option 1 because I have also assisted numerous families in completing other Economic Services Applications - It would be great if these lengthy application could cover the majority of services available to families who meet the requirements instead of a single application for each program.

4/5/11 12:42AM

In case my comments are too long for this method of input, I will send comments via email to Monica and the committee - working group - to back up my reasons for recommending Model # 1 keeping eligibility functions/services in community based organizations - Helen Keith Here goes my try: MEMO TO: Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) Eligibility Determination Model Analysis Group FROM: Helen Keith, Consultant, Early Childhood and Family Support Services: Planning and Development, former Director, Child Care Services Division DATE: April 1, 2011 REASON: Reasons why I am recommending keeping the eligibility function for child care services in the community – Model # 1. Thank you for allowing me and others the opportunity to comment on the proposals that were listed on the CDD website. I am unable to attend the forum on Monday April 4th as I am out of state during that time but would like to share some thoughts. I am commenting because I held the position of Division Director for the Child Care Services Division (CCSD) during the time it was created by the legislature. My tenure as Director ended in 1992 when I left to join a national infant mental health non-profit in Washington, DC. I currently operate my own early childhood and family support consulting business. I do not represent anyone except myself in sharing this information and offering my opinion. I left the CCSD position in 1992 and as I recall the division employed 7 - 8 FTE state employee child care eligibility specialists and one supervisor who carried caseloads of between 160 and 240 “cases” each. Those with the lower caseloads traveled between district offices. They were bursting at the seams then. I believe, in 96-97 the CCSD Director, Kim Keiser, then had to reduce the number of state employees in the Division (state cost saving requirements) by cutting the eligibility specialists state employee positions and putting the child care eligibility functions into community based organizations (the Child Care Community Support Agencies). While we had often considered the placement of this function integrated into the community with community based organizations, it was still painful to lay state employees off and transition the functions into the community, at first. Putting the function into child caring community based organizations, families could seek services and be exposed to resource personnel who on a daily basis, work with families to help those families help their children (by having knowledgeable people physically present to address numerous issues that could put children and families at risk: the real problem of continuity of care for very young children; health, safety and quality issues with families and providers). Historically and much more so now, the people in these positions and those positions related to them, sitting nearby,

offer connections/resources/opportunities for prevention, early intervention and treatment services as needed and wanted. Again, I believe that decision to move the eligibility functions into child caring community based organizations was a smart one and correct. While painful to the state employees at that time, the results actually benefited, even more than expected, the children, families and multiple service providers at the community level. And it cost less than keeping a state work force, it increased employment at the community level – a good goal to have at times like those and times like now. Putting the work at the community level was a very good thing, with multiple benefits. The CCFAP eligibility and family support/work at the community child care support agencies was/is a foundational part of the local infrastructure that supports (now) • Early Head Start/Head Start (this could be even more important in the future); • The colocation of the resource and referral, resource development, and provider payment, STARS and other quality issues. While at the Community Child Care Support Agencies in regions now, these functions could remain there or become even more integrated with EHS/HS, CIS, Parent Child Centers or others who perform important, high quality, comprehensive services for young children and their families; and • For those families with a service need and who are income eligible, access to financial support (CCFA) in combination with high quality resource support through CIS and/or high quality group care through EHS/HS or 3- 5 STAR – accredited comprehensive child care programs prevents placements in sub-standard services. It maximizes opportunities early on, something so many of us have been working for these past 31 or more years. Finally we have a much more integrated system at the community level that supports community based employment as well, another bonus for keeping the services at the community level. Clearly these are hard financial times impacting families at their most vulnerable time as they try their best to raise their young children and have successful pregnancies and births, These key eligibility functions, in my opinion, will be much more effective at the community level than at the state level. Keeping the complete eligibility function (not only navigation, but navigation is better than no community connection) builds community-based employment, which I thought was a major long term goal of several administrations. Again, for the reasons of cost, community based rather than state run services, and for benefits to children and families I think it best to use the community based model number 1. I hope this view of history is helpful. I wish you all the best in these times of tough decisions - Helen Keith  
4/4/11 8:01AM

Model #1: Community Based Model is the best option for Rutland County. Without our local Financial Assistance Specialists, families, child care and home day care providers would struggle. There are numerous families that I have worked with, past and present, that have great difficulty in completing applications and getting in materials. Many of these families do not know how to read and write. Asking families to go to a kiosk and file their paperwork with little to no assistance would be extremely overwhelming for them. Providers would be left with spaces to fill because families did not file their paperwork at all or did not fill it out correctly. Having a person to talk to, face to face, who can answer questions and give guidance is what our families have experienced. For them, having the ability to stop in, without an appointment, has been very beneficial along with the positive interactions and guidance they have been given. Without the specialists, the Early Education and Care program at VAC would have been at a serious financial loss. These ladies stay current with families, keeping them on track so that paperwork does not lapse. For us this means, children get to stay in the program, less confusion on tuition billing for families and VAC receives the accurate amount of financial assistance. If

we have a question, we get a return phone call that day, if not within the hour. In regards to the portal information for child care providers to check on the status of applications, this is a great idea! All for it. Sincerely, Diahn Johnson VAC Early Education and Care Director

4/2/11 3:00AM

I like the hybrid approach. That seems to be both the best for families as well as cost saving for the state. I would also suggest that to be truly family friendly, the best approach is for families with complex needs should have the option to have child care financial assistance determined by an ESD staff person so that eligibility determination is made with one application, one process, and a referral to the other child care support services can also be made. It seems there are a lot of families who know that their only service need is for child care and it is better for them to work with the community agencies.

4/2/11 1:42AM

Model #3 says a Hybrid version with either 2A or 2B. Are we going to discuss these two different models at the interactive informational meeting?

4/2/11 1:05AM

Model #3 says a Hybrid version with either 2A or 2B. Are we going to discuss these two different models at the interactive informational meeting?

4/2/11 1:04AM