



2012 Policy and Legislative Agenda

The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) works to end poverty and to engage, equip and empower all families in Connecticut to build a secure future. An effective public education system is critical to a level playing field for all citizens and a vibrant economy-- and must be accessible to **all** children, regardless of income or where they live. We must also recognize that Connecticut's areas of concentrated poverty and lack of opportunity require a new public policy focus to give all families the opportunity to succeed.

POLICY GOALS

Education

Connecticut's education system is broken and needs major reform, so that all children achieve their potential and compete in the global economy. Policy- and lawmakers need to create a continuum of education that:

- Begins with a coordinated and universally accessible system of **early care and education**.
- Ensures **grade-level reading success** for all children by grade three.
- Instills in **all** students the belief that they can and will go to college or pursue other post-secondary education.
- **Aligns curriculums** of public school systems with higher education and the needs of the workforce.
- Collects, analyzes and shares **data** needed to ensure student, school and systems success, with systems that are transparent and accessible to the public and policy makers.
- Provides for full and equitable **involvement for all parents** in their children's education, respecting parents' cultures and work demands.
- **Prioritize racial and economic integration** for all school construction and operations, including new school construction, charters, magnets and inter-district programs.

Postsecondary Education and Workforce Training

Working adults in Connecticut who lack a high school diploma or postsecondary credential need effective, coordinated basic skills education that respects their need to provide for their families while leading to training for jobs in growth fields. Effective pilot programs that provide this coordination and support should be evaluated, and the best fully funded and brought to scale for students throughout the state.

Family Economic Success

CAHS supports policies to ensure every family can earn a sustaining wage with fair benefits:

- **Modernize Connecticut's revenue system** to ensure it is equitable and sustainable.
- **Benefits integration:** Many residents do not know about or receive benefits that could help them meet basic needs and become self-sufficient. DSS must provide information and assistance in a timely manner and ensure its new information system captures all needed programs and services across state agencies, not just DSS, so all residents are informed of all programs for which they qualify.
- **Evaluate all public policies** to determine whether they disproportionately impact minorities.
- Support the right and ability of workers to **organize** and work for sustaining wages with **family-supporting benefits**.
- **Require** a portion of workers on publicly-funded infrastructure projects be from those high-need areas.
- **Expand Jobs Funnels** to train and connect workers to jobs in high-growth fields, in addition to the successful programs working with the construction trades.
- **Tailor public transportation** to ensure residents without cars can get to jobs.



2012 Legislative Agenda

- Raise Connecticut's **Minimum Wage** and index it to rise with inflation to ensure families retain earning power.
- Require each **Priority School District high school to link to a community college or state university**. Minimum outcomes: College or university and school-12 district leadership and faculty work together to 1., **evaluate and align curriculums**, share expectations, monitor student data and better prepare students to succeed in college; and 2., **test students and evaluate results**, junior year or sooner, to gauge and establish college readiness.
- **Improve the quality of care** to children in licensed day care homes with additional funding for the very successful Early Learning Guidelines coaching and consultation program for family day care providers.
- Ensure education reform supports proven programs to ensure **grade-level reading success**, including mentoring programs for teachers, those that address chronic absenteeism and summer learning loss.
- Ensure that all minor parents have access to Care4Kids by changing the household income requirements to exclude the income of parents of minor parents.
- Create stability for families by allowing women on maternity leave to continue receiving Care4Kids.
- Require that the **Postsecondary Enrollment and Completion reports**, collected and disseminated for the first time this year to public schools by the P-20 Council, produced **every two years** and used to ensure systems alignment and accountability.

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CAHS is a member of the **Campaign for a Working Connecticut** and **Better Choices for Connecticut**.