Opportunity Connecticut

In the face of a large state budget deficit, lackluster job growth, and rising inequality, Connecticut can turn a crisis into an opportunity. Working with business, labor, municipalities, and nonprofits, policymakers can work to create a growing economy that generates new jobs and sufficient revenue for the state to fund effective programs and services. The budget challenges for the state and some cities should spur innovative thinking to reduce costs and produce better results, including increased equity. Our wealthy state must invest to ensure that all children and families can succeed and share in Connecticut’s high quality of life. CAHS supports the following:

HELP CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THRIVE

- Fund programs that enable families to meet basic needs and succeed, including the Two-Generation Program, Care4Kids child care subsidies, and HUSKY health care.
- Make work pay by protecting the state Earned Income Tax Credit, raising the minimum wage, and providing family medical leave insurance.
- Help unite and re-unite families with criminal justice and re-entry reforms, including elimination of bond requirements for non-violent drug offenses and automatic erasure of drug misdemeanors.

GENERATE JOBS

- Encourage business expansion, including permitting targeted use of “stranded” research and development investment tax credits to drive new capital investments and create permanent jobs (but not allowing expanded use to offset current tax liabilities).
- Incentivize businesses to redevelop brownfield sites with state tax incentives.
- Invest in infrastructure, including accessibility of broadband.
- Sustain and improve workforce programs, including adult ed, the Two Generation Pilot Program, Jobs Funnel, Second Chance Initiatives, and developmental programs at community colleges. Maximize federal SNAP E&T and apprenticeship funding, and re-open Care4Kids.
PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

- As a first step to ensure quality K-12 education, reconfigure the Education Cost Sharing formula to direct more resources to high-need districts. Develop a plan to equitably and adequately fund outstanding education: early, vocational, adult, and post-secondary.
- Adequately fund early care and education, allowing all children access to high quality programs and staff the ability to earn a living wage.
- Continue financial support for remedial education reform in community colleges, including direct funding for adult education programs.
- In the short term, use existing resources to promote “debt-free college” by encouraging FAFSA completion and financial education on paying for post-secondary education in high school and college.

MAKE GOVERNMENT WORK BETTER

- Balance the state budget responsibly, including maximizing federal funds, collecting all revenue due to the state, and generating new revenue that promotes fairness, such as broadening the sales tax to include more services.
- Promote systems reform among state agencies and between state and municipal government, including two-generation strategies that use collaborations to provide opportunity for both funders and their children from the same point of entry, coordination of workforce programs and agencies, and criminal justice reforms.
- Fund new infrastructure improvements, focusing on rail and public transportation, as well as broadband, and create apprenticeships for urban residents.
- Regulate paid tax preparers to protect tax filers and save the state money from overpayments of refunds and credits.

The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) is a statewide nonprofit agency that works to engage, equip, and empower all families in Connecticut to build a secure future.

The Family Economic Success (FES) Coalition shares information and mobilizes advocates, providers, and others on policy issues that improve the lives of low-income children and families. CAHS coordinates the FES Coalition.