



# **Public Benefits to Assist Families**

**Helping Families Move Forward**

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# Representing Low Income Parents in CHIPS cases

- An essential key to success in CHIPS cases is addressing the poverty issues low income parents face on a daily basis.
- Successful completion of case plans requires parents' attorneys to assist clients in accessing public benefits.





## Poverty Issues)

- How will the parent survive financially?
- What government benefits programs are available?
- Where do they apply for these benefits?
- Is affordable housing available?
- Is transportation reimbursed to the parent?
- Helping families leverage more resources.



# Where Do You Apply for Government Benefits?

- Most program are administered by County Welfare Departments
- County Departments of Economic Assistance
- County Social Service Agencies

# What is a Combined Application Form?

- Combined Application Form part 1 (CAF 1)
- Establishes the application date
- Combined Application Form part 2 (CAF 2)
- Determines your eligibility for a number of programs such as
- MFIP-S, medical assistance, food stamps. General Assistance, emergency assistance



# Website to Online CAF Application

## Minnesota

- [http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/Economic\\_support/documents/pub/dhs\\_Economic\\_Support.hcsp](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/groups/Economic_support/documents/pub/dhs_Economic_Support.hcsp)



# Definitions of Poverty


→ poverty

→ near poverty


→ extreme poverty





# Facts about Poverty



✧ For a family of 3, the federal poverty line is an annual household income of \$19,090.00



✧ The *extreme* poverty line is \$9,545.00 for a family of 3



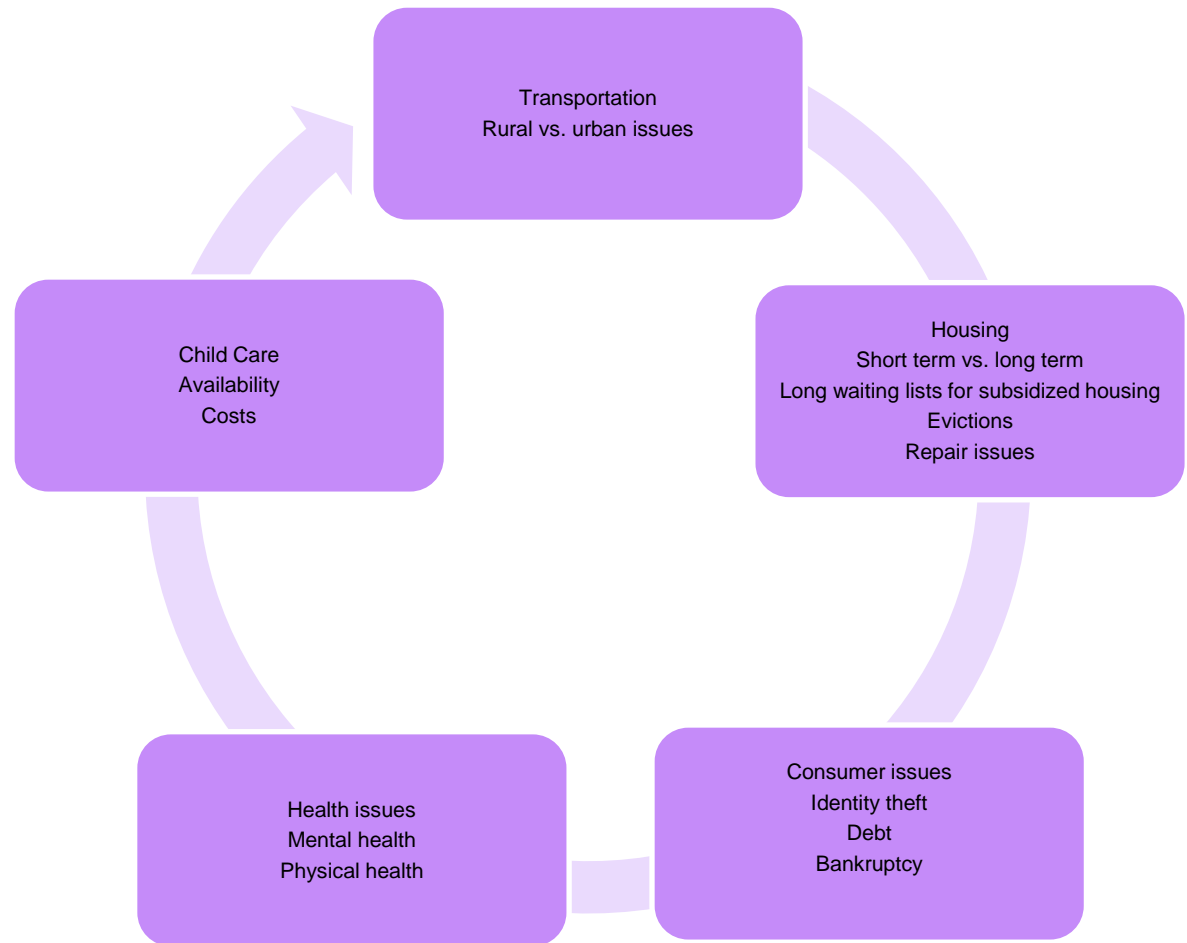


# Impact of Poverty on Children

- ❑ It takes an average of 4-6 months for a child to recover academically from a change in schools.
- ❑ 66% of students who missed 20 or more school days during first, second and third grade drop out of school
- ❑ 50% of all children in shelter show signs of anxiety and depression
- ❑ 10% of all elementary age school children in Minneapolis experience homelessness each year



# Circle of Poverty



# Food and Nutrition

- Food stamps/ SNAP
- Food Shelves
- Free School Breakfast and Lunch
- WIC-Women, Infants and Children
- Free meal sites





# Eligibility for Government Benefit Program

## □ Categorical Eligibility

- For example, parent has a minor child
- MFIP- S

## □ Financial Eligibility

- Income
- Assets



# Government Benefit Programs for Families

- ❑ MFIP-S-monthly cash assistance program for families
- ❑ Food Stamps
- ❑ Medical Assistance
- ❑ EBT Cards link in Minn.
- ❑ <http://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserv er/Legacy/DHS-3315A-ENG>



- Marie, 24 years old, has a one-year-old daughter, Laurie. A CHIPS petition has been filed against Marie based on neglect issues. Marie is working on the case plan. The judge is giving permission for Laurie to be placed in Marie's home under protective supervision.
- Marie goes to the Hennepin County Department of Economic Assistance to apply for Minnesota Family Investment Program-Statewide (MFIP-S), Food Stamps and Medical Assistance. Marie's application for these benefits was recently approved. Her financial worker just informed Marie that she will be getting \$437 per month in cash benefits and \$367 in Food Stamps. Marie will have medical coverage for both her and Laurie. Marie will have to pay for her and Laurie's expenses from the \$437 per month. Food Stamps can only be used for food items; any non-food items will have to be paid for from the cash portion. Please help Marie set up a budget for herself and Laurie. The financial worker told Marie that the County will pay for her damage deposit and first month's rent and any other related costs to move in at a new apartment. This is paid from the MFIP-Emergency Assistance program. Once Marie uses the MFIP-EA, she will not be able to use it again for the next twelve months.



# Government Benefit Programs for Individuals or Couples Without Children

- ❑ General Assistance
- ❑ Food Stamps
- ❑ General Assistance Medical Coverage

# Client's Children Removed From the Home

- If your client's children are removed from the home, what benefits are available for the client to survive?
- MFIP - Can continue to receive MFIP if the participant child is out of the home due to placement in foster care as defined in sections 260B.007, subdivision 7, and 260C.007, subdivision 18, when the placement will not be paid under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, and when the absence is expected to last no more than six months beyond the month of departure;
- If not eligible for General Assistance - \$203.00 per month
- Food Stamps
- Medical Assistance







# A Parent Who has Physical or Mental Health Impairments

- A parent who has physical or mental health impairments may be eligible for a disability program through the Social Security Administration
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI)
- Refer the parent to SSA to apply for these programs.
- If SSA denies the parent's application, refer the parent to a legal aid attorney or other attorney who can represent this parent on appeal.



# Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

- Monthly amount for SSI is \$710.00
- RSDI monthly amount varies
- Advantages of these programs:
  - No time limit
  - Monthly cash amounts are higher

# Using Emergency Assistance to Assist a Parent with an Emergency?

- ❑ Mortgage foreclosure
- ❑ Eviction
- ❑ Damage deposit
- ❑ First and last months rent



# More Emergencies

- ❑ Utility shut-off
- ❑ Homeless shelter
- ❑ Broken furnace
- ❑ Fire
- ❑ Flood
- ❑ Other health and safety repairs on the house



# Applying for Emergency Assistance

- Apply at county welfare office





# Low Income Families Who are Working

- ❑ May qualify for programs such as:
- ❑ Food stamps
- ❑ Minnesota Care
- ❑ Emergency Assistance
- ❑ In addition you need to consider community based resources such as food shelves, meal sites

# Appeal Rights

Client has a right to appeal most unfavorable actions such as:

- ❑ Termination of benefits
- ❑ Reduction of benefits
- ❑ Suspension of benefits
- ❑ Delay in processing benefits
- ❑ Sanctions



# Appeal Timelines

- ❑ Vary by program
- ❑ Must move quickly to get continued benefits pending appeal







# Public Benefits for Immigrants

- Public Benefit for Immigrants
- Fact sheet I-2 from [www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org)
- Consult with legal aid attorneys in your area for further legal advice.



# Earned Income Tax Credit

- Low income individuals may be eligible for tax credits which can greatly improve their financial situation.
- Tax Refunds for People with Low Incomes, see fact sheet T-1 from [www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org)

# Transportation

- Medical Assistance will reimburse mileage to medical appointments.
- Ask the court to order the county to pay for bus cards or transportation reimbursement.
- Key to completing a case plan is having transportation.



# Housing

- A low income parent should apply for subsidized housing.
- Please see Guide to Public Housing booklet
- Public Housing List for Minnesota, see [www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org)



# Marie

- Based on our discussions today, what advice would we give Marie.





# Referrals

- First Call for Help, United Way
  - Call 211 from landline
  - Call 651-291-0211 from cell phone
  
- Law Help Minnesota
  - [www.lawhelpmn.org](http://www.lawhelpmn.org)
    - Fact sheets and booklets for clients and attorneys