

PUBLIC BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST FAMILIES

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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?

- Minnesota's Department of Human Services (DHS) is the lead state agency on our welfare and public benefits programs.
- Most program are administered by County Human Services 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, Medical Assistance, SNAP (formerly food stamps), General Assistance, emergency assistance

Website to Online CAF Application

Minnesota

- <http://www.applymn.dhs.mn.gov>

Definitions of Poverty

➡ poverty

➡ near poverty

➡ extreme poverty

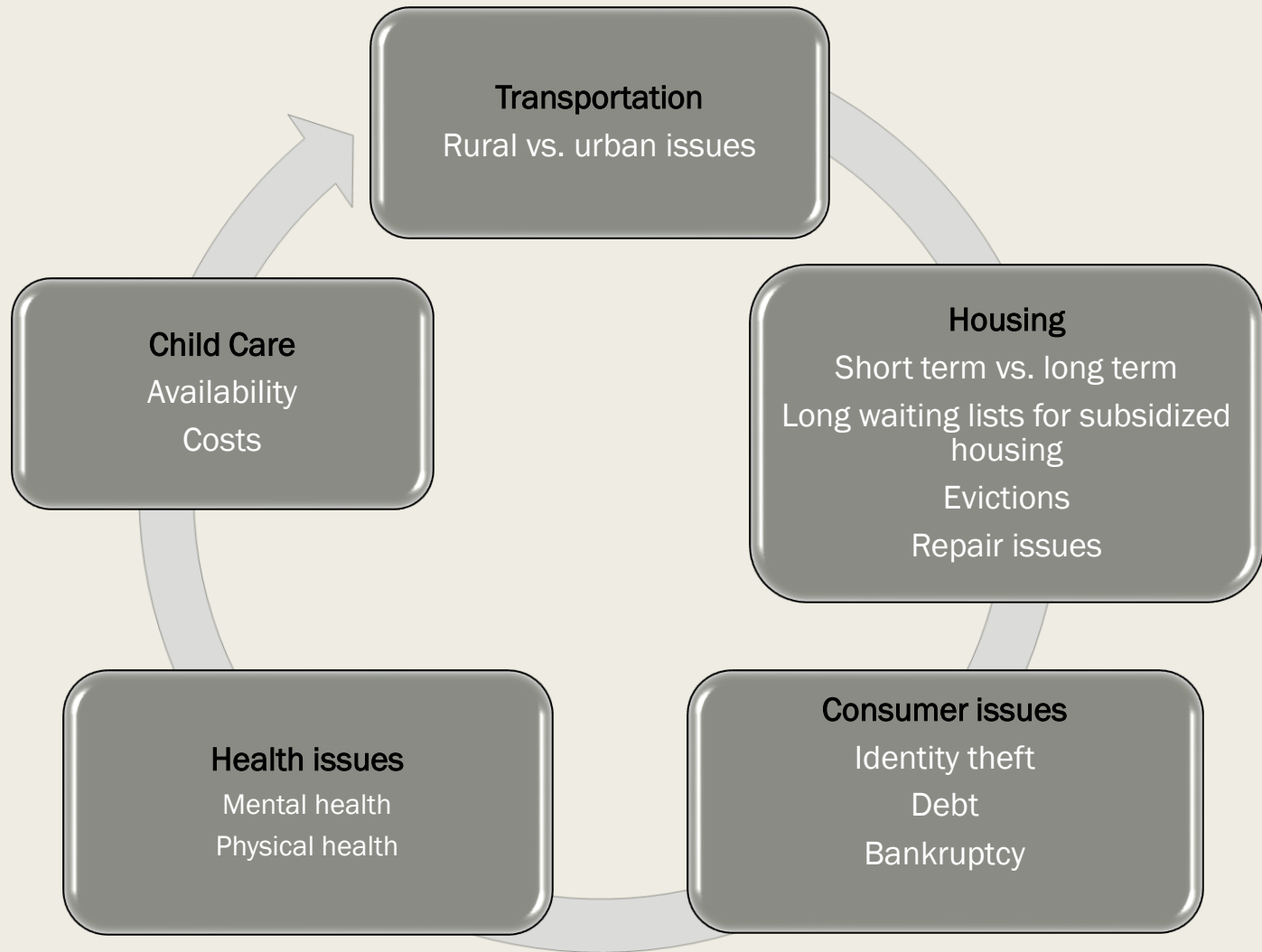
Facts about Poverty

- ✧ For a family of 3, the federal poverty line is an annual household income of \$25,200
- ✧ MN's MFIP program for a family of 3 provides \$6,384 per year.

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*

Financial Eligibility

- *Income*
- *Assets*

Government Benefit Programs for Families

- MFIP monthly cash assistance program for families
- SNAP
- Medical Assistance
- EBT Cards link in Minn.
- <https://www.mn.gov/dhs>

- 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 Hennepin County Humans Services to apply for MFIP, SNAP, and Medical Assistance. Marie's application was recently approved. Her financial worker tells Marie that she will be getting \$437 per month in cash benefits and \$367 in SNAP. Marie will have medical coverage for both her and Laurie. Marie will have to pay for all her and Laurie's expenses aside from food from the \$437 per month. SNAP 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 into a new apartment. This is paid from the MFIP-Emergency Assistance program. Once Marie uses EA, she will not be able to use it again for the next 12 months.

Government Benefit Programs for Individuals or Couples Without Children

- General Assistance

- SNAP
 - ABAWD

- Medical Assistance

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, subdiv. 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 only eligible for General Assistance - \$203 per month
- SNAP (temporary absence)
- Medical Assistance (tax dependents)

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 \$733
- 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:
- SNAP
- 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
- 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

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

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
 - *Fact sheets and booklets for clients and attorneys*