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Calendar of Events

Events relating to helping children are available at: www.tn.gov/tccy/webcalen.pdf.

TCCY

For more information on the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth and its programs, check out the website at www.tn.gov/tccy.

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2012 Legislative Session: The Good News

Several essential programs at risk of elimination in the upcoming 2013 fiscal year were restored in the budget approved by the General Assembly in April.

In 2010, faced with declining revenues not expected to improve until 2014, the General Assembly established a Core Services Reserve, setting aside resources from the state's Rainy Day Fund to provide almost \$180 million per year in funding for essential public services benefitting Tennessee's most vulnerable populations during the 2011 and 2012 fiscal years. With revenue improving, the budget proposed for fiscal year 2013 continued to fund many of these programs with non-recurring revenue. Non-recurring revenues are tax dollars received in one fiscal year, usually when revenues exceeded those previously estimated, and may or may not be available in the next fiscal year. Other programs were added by the Administration in its subsequent Budget Amendment.

The Coordinated School Health Program was one of the essential programs funded for fiscal year 2012-13. The program was restored on a recurring basis, increasing the likelihood that it will be funded on an annual basis in the future. Tennessee was one of the first states in the nation to mandate a statewide coordinated approach to improving student's health and academic outcomes. Results from studies of the



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Coordinated School Health Programs have shown reduced absenteeism, increased nurse-to-student ratios, expanded access to health screenings, increased access to health care services and improved health care education.

Another important education program, Family Resource Centers, was in jeopardy of elimination in fiscal year 2013, but non-recurring dollars were provided in the final budget. There are currently 104 Family Resource Centers in 68 Tennessee counties. Family Resource Centers act as a liaison between local schools and social service agencies to improve access to services for at risk children and families to support and improve their academic success. It is vital that funds for Family Resource Centers are preserved in future budgets and expanded so that children in all Tennessee counties can have the opportunity to benefit from their services.

In the Department of Mental Health's budget, several essential services funded in previous fiscal years with reserve funds were continued. Teen Screen, Childcare Consultation and two respite programs are funded this year from other departmental revenue. Major reductions in peer support centers were also averted. The Administration included \$1 million in recurring funds related to the closure of Lakeshore Mental Institute in Knoxville in its Budget Amendment for peer support centers in East Tennessee, and another \$1.3 in non-recurring funds was added by the General Assembly for peer support centers in the remainder of the state.

Two home visiting programs were funded in the fiscal year 2012-13 budget with non-recurring funding. Child Health and Development (CHAD) and Healthy Start were initially identified for elimination in the budget as proposed. Quality home visitation programs can play an important role in improving outcomes for high risk infants and children and their families by reducing infant mortality and child abuse, increasing rates of childhood immunization and increasing parental understanding of a child's developmental needs. The Governor's Budget Amendment restored the funding on a non-recurring basis. Separate legislation proposed by the Administration will require evidence-based home visiting programs to enable the state to access federal funding. CHAD and Healthy Start funding should be continued in future budgets along with the state's continued transition to evidence-based home visiting programs. (See page 7 for more information on home visitation.)

Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) initially faced a funding reduction of \$250,000. These funds were also restored by the Governor's Budget Amendment. Tennessee currently has Children's Advocacy Centers



Rep. Mark White presenting Commission member and advocate for children in custody and Fostering Connections legislation, Tawny Spinelli, with a Tennessee flag flown in her honor.

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2012 Legislative Session: The Bad News

TCCY CPORT Program Ends June 30

On January 30, Governor Haslam released his proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2012. While there were many essential items included in the budget continuing important programs for children that for the past two years had been on the verge of elimination, two programs implemented by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth were identified for elimination.

One of those programs, the State Supplements for Juvenile Courts, was later restored to be administered by the Department of Children's Services instead of TCCY.

The other, the Children's Program Outcome Review Team (CPORT), despite the strong support of many members of the General Assembly, was not.

On June 30, CPORT will end and, with it, TCCY will lose 19 positions and 17 valued and respected staff members who will be truly missed by their co-workers and sorely missed by the most vulnerable children of our state, those in the custody of the Department of Children's Services (DCS).

Since 1994, CPORT provided the only unbiased, annual, independent quality service review of a statistically valid random sample of cases of children in or at risk of state custody. Through the efforts and recommendations of CPORT, many improvements in policies and services have been put in place that will improve the lives of those children reviewed and the system now and for many years to come.

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Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

Cindy Durham, Chair
Nashville

Phil Acord
Chattanooga

Natasha Blackshear
Nashville

Sidney Bynum
Hendersonville

Lindsay Callahan
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Janell Clark
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Lynne Fugate
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Erica Gilmore
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Tim Goldsmith
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Marti Herndon
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Denise Hobbs
Shelbyville

Trudy Hughes
Maryville

Susan Lawless-Glassman
Germantown

Amy Lawrence
Knoxville

Carlton Lewis
Nashville

Rob Mortensen
Nashville

Harold Moses Love, Jr.
Nashville

Billy Posey
Covington

Wendy Shea
Memphis

Christy Sigler
LaVergne

Tawny Spinelli
Nashville

Dwight Stokes
Sevierville

Jill Grayson Stott
Jonesborough

Linda O'Neal
Executive Director

Over the past 18 years, many case managers, foster parents, service providers and juvenile court staff in every county have become familiar with not only the CPORT process but also the individual reviewers, some who have been with the program since its inception in 1994. Some of the TCCY staff losing their positions June 30 had as many as 25 years of dedicated service to the state of Tennessee. Due to reductions in other departments, impending changes in the civil service system and other reasons, many have been unable to transfer to other state positions.

The elimination of this program has affected the entire agency. Due to current civil service guidelines, where senior employees bump those with fewer years of service, along with major reductions in federal funding for juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs, TCCY will also lose three staff members in its Juvenile Justice Division and have fewer grant dollars to offer for delinquency prevention in the future.

TCCY Commission members and staff made diligent efforts to get the funding for the program restored even before the Commission knew the reduction was coming. The Commission sent a letter to the Governor dated August 29, 2011, informing him of the importance of the CPORT process, including the important improvements that have been made for children in state custody over the years and those still needed. TCCY is required by statute to make annual budget recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

Despite no indication from the Governor's Budget Hearing in November with DCS Commissioner O'Day that the program would be eliminated, TCCY once again sent a letter to the Governor in December expressing concern for the continuation of the program.

Upon the presentation of the budget, TCCY staff began meeting with senators and representatives of both parties requesting restoration of the funding. Ultimately, these efforts were unsuccessful.

In the TCCY budget hearings before the Senate Health and Welfare Committee and the House Finance, Ways and Means Committee, legislators expressed strong support for the program. The Senate Health and Welfare Committee, on the motion of Senator Douglas Henry, appointed a subcommittee to look into the matter. The subcommittee met with Commissioner O'Day and TCCY Executive Director Linda O'Neal, along with key staff from both agencies, and recommended continuation of



CPORT staffers Susan Cope, Jennifer Hargis and Pat Wade

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CPORT Director Pat Wade

the program through an amendment to the Appropriations bill restoring 14 of the 19 positions proposed for elimination.

In addition to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee amendment, amendments to restore all the funding were filed in both the House and the Senate by Rep. David Hawk and Senator Bill Ketron. Both amendments were heard before their respective Finance Committees, and Senator Doug Overbey attempted to file another one later.

None of these amendments were identified for inclusion in the budget. Senator Henry was set to make one final effort before the Senate Finance Committee to have the funding restored but fell ill on the way from the Capitol to the committee room in Legislative Plaza and had to be hospitalized. Senator Ketron moved the amendment in Senator Henry's absence, but the motion failed on a voice vote with only 10 members present.

Despite the efforts and support of Commission members, child advocates from across the state, concerned stakeholders, open government supporters and others, the funding to continue CPORT was not included in the Appropriations bill. The Administration and the Department adamantly and aggressively opposed the amendment to restore the funding, and the majority felt compelled to support the Governor.

We at TCCY would like to take this opportunity to thank the senators and representatives who came to our aid during this difficult session to try to save this important program for improving the lives of children in state custody. While all our efforts were in vain, we take comfort knowing there are great leaders in our state who will ensure the needs of children in state custody will not be forgotten in the future.

It should be noted that this reduction was not about a shortfall in revenue. Though still not at the same level as seen before the beginning of the Great Recession, sales tax collections have grown for 26 consecutive months according to the May 2012 Revenue report from the Department of Finance and Administration. May 2012 was the 10th consecutive month of revenue growth over estimates. As of May, the state had collected \$412 million over budget estimates for fiscal year 2011-12 and \$202 million over the amount the budget for fiscal year 2012-13 was based on with two months of revenue still to be accrued.¶¶

Six Commission Members End Terms after Nine Years of Service

The May Commission meeting was the last for six Commission members, who had served for three three-year terms: Chair Cindy Durham, Natasha Blackshear, Beverly Cosley, Tim Goldsmith, Trudy Hughes and Susan Lawless-Glassman. State law limits service to three consecutive terms; however, this was the largest number of Commission members to serve together through the full nine years. Cindy Durham served as chair throughout her nine years on the Commission. TCCY thanks these dedicated child advocates for their service to the children of Tennessee.



Tim Goldsmith, Trudy Hughes, Beverly Cosley, Natasha Blackshear and Susan Lawless-Glasman

Home Visitation Update

From Kristen Rector
Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee

Work continues under the Home Visitation Collaboration, and this year the Collaboration assisted in successful refunding of the Healthy Start programs. Several evidence-based models are represented, including Healthy Families America, Parents as Teachers and the Nurse Family Partnership.

In addition to the surviving Healthy Start programs, Tennessee was awarded funding through the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting, MIECHV). The program in Tennessee was named Healthier Beginnings, and through a competitive grant application process, five programs were awarded funding to provide evidence-based home visiting services. They include:

- Parents as Teachers (a program of Hamilton County Health Department), Hamilton County;
- Healthy Families Tennessee (a program of Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee), Davidson County;
- Child and Family Tennessee, Campbell County;
- Centerstone, Maury County;
- Early Success Coalition (providing Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers and Healthy Families programming), Shelby County.



Home visitation worker teaches mother in Chattanooga.

For more information about the value and history of Tennessee home visitation programs, see TCCY's February 2011 newsletter at <http://www.tn.gov/tccy/adv1101.pdf>

CASA Update

TCCY is celebrating with CASA programs in eight counties's. Among the 46 counties being served by members of the Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Network, prior to legislative action, programs serving eight counties did not receive a state allocation of \$15,000 through the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth. These counties will now receive funding beginning in fiscal year 2012-13. The counties are Fayette, Weakley, Jefferson, Smith, Cumberland, Loudon, Franklin and Bradley. A total of \$120,000 in recurring dollars for these counties was approved, meaning this funding is part of the budget and does not have to be reconsidered each year. This funding provides a stable base of support for local CASA programs. As noted earlier in the newsletter, Tennessee CASA will receive \$10,000 in non-recurring funds for programs and services.

Currently there are 26 programs, but 49 counties continue to lack a CASA program for their children. Over 1,379 CASA volunteers served 5,504 abused and neglected children in these programs during calendar year 2011. This represented a 13.8 percent increase in children served compared to the previous year and a 5.3 percent increase in CASA volunteers. The median cost per child served is \$696, well below the national median of \$1,040.

Source: Cheryl Hultman, executive director, Tennessee CASA Association

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KIDS COUNT Update

This year is a busy one for the KIDS COUNT program. Tennessee released *KIDS COUNT: The State of the Child in Tennessee* on June 6. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the parent of the KIDS COUNT Project, will also release two policy briefs and two data briefs this year, in addition to the upcoming KIDS COUNT National Data Book.



Tennessee's KIDS COUNT book (available at www.tn.gov/tccy/kc-soc11.pdf) lists county by county information on 43 indicators. It also includes a report from TCCY's Resource Mapping Project. Lessons from the Resource Mapping section of the report, which also includes recommendations for the future, were:

- State spending on services to children is heavily dependent on federal spending, with nearly half (45 percent) of all spending coming from federal sources and nine of every 10 non-Basic Education Program dollars either federal funding or state spending required to draw it down.
- Despite their potential to reduce future, much more expensive intensive intervention costs, prevention services received, as a category, the least amount of funding.

Children Living in America's High-Poverty Communities, the data brief the Annie E. Casey Foundation released in February looked at areas of high poverty. Research finds that, regardless of their family income, children growing up amid concentrated poverty are more at risk. One of every eight Tennessee children is growing up in a community weakened by pervasive poverty, according to the snapshot's analysis of Census data for 2006 to 2010. One fourth of Tennessee children live in poverty, with half those living in communities with concentrated poverty, according to the data.

Stepping Up for Kids: What Government and Communities Should Do to Support Kinship Families, the policy report released in May, examined the plight of children being cared for by family members other than parents and by family friends. According to the data in the report, Tennessee has one of the highest rates of kinship care in the nation. One in every 20 Tennessee children – 5 percent – lives with family members or close family friends instead of parents. Despite its Relative Caregiver Program to provide short-term financial help and other services for kinship families, the state's use of kinship care for children in custody was less than most other states.

Data on the 43 indicators in *KIDS COUNT: The State of the Child in Tennessee* and other state specific data are also available at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

The KIDS COUNT special reports, including the annual National Data Book can be found by navigating from <http://www.aecf.org/> or directly going to <http://ti-nyurl.com/82u9e5q>. 