

**Draft Minutes of the Economic Security and Empowerment Subcommittee  
Vermont Child Poverty Council**

**Room 32**

11/12/15

**Meeting Date:** 11/12/15, 11:15 – 12:00

**Subcommittee Members in Attendance:**

Sen. Claire Ayer

Rep. Diane Lanpher

Paul Dragon, Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity

Karen Lafayette, Subcommittee Chair

Annie Noonan, Department of Labor

**Others in Attendance:**

Christopher Curtis, Vermont Legal Aid

David Hall, Legislative Council

Nolan Langweil, Joint Fiscal Office

Marjorie Zunder, Legislative Council

**Topics Discussed**

- Subcommittee issues – Stabilization for families, Reach Up, food security, dental benefits
- Christopher Curtis – Reach Up is effective and innovative, a success story. Helps low income people with housing, cash assistance, meeting work requirements. Program addresses benefits cliff. Recommends strengthening.
- Christopher Curtis – Last year, Reach Up grants for children in households with disabled parents on SSI were cut, destabilizing families. Parents with disabilities are not counted in the number of people in the household to receive a Reach Up grant.
- Christopher Curtis – Cut will set families back even though the courts declared it legal. A Reach Up cut should be considered a tax on families.
- Christopher Curtis – Council could recommend that the Legislature hear testimony from families in the Reach Up program about the effect of the cut.
- Christopher Curtis – Funds from the cut should fund other parts of Reach Up.
- Discussion – Making changes to the access system might provide more federal dollars
- Follow up – Study Subcommittee recommendations from Karen Lafayette that will be circulated to Subcommittee members

**Motions**

No motions were made during the meeting.

*Minutes prepared by Marjorie Zunder, Legislative Counsel*