A Picture of Children & Families in Main Street Communities
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Introduction
Connecticut Voices for Children

Independent Research & Analysis

− Nonpartisan
− Data Driven

Interrelation of Research, Policy and Advocacy

− Demographic changes create social pressure for policy changes now.
− Increasing income inequality threatens the long term economic health of the state.
− Investing in children yields long term economic benefits for the state.
− Children do well when families do well.
Introduction
Data Project Presentation

Baseline for assessing needs
  - Identify High-Need Communities
  - Broad variety of issues to paint a picture of children & families

Opportunities for wise investments and policy advocacy
  - Where can your energy and resources make the most difference?
  - What are the most effective policies to pursue?

Learning from each other
  - State and local level
  - Understanding local context and areas of focus
Agenda

• Introduction

• Part I: Demographic Challenges & Child Poverty

• Part 2: Targeted Investments for Healthy Childhood Development
  – Families
  – Education
  – Health

• Part 3: Specific Policy Recommendations, Next Steps & Discussion
Introduction

Main Street Communities

Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, Southington, Wolcott
Part One: Demographics & Child Poverty
Demographics
Main Street Communities

Median Household Income in 2011

Median Age in 2011

Population Growth 2000 to 2010

Percent Non-Hispanic White

Older, Avg. Pop. Growth, Mostly White, Above Avg. Income

Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-yr table B19013
Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-yr table B01002
Source: Census 2000 SF1 P16 & Census 2010 SF2 PCT5
Source: Census 2010 SF2 PCT5

www.ctvoices.org
Demographic Challenges

Shifting demographics require a more educated workforce

- Employers are struggling to find enough skilled workers. The demand for workers with a postsecondary credential or degree is expected to outpace the supply.

- As the elderly population grows, Connecticut faces the prospect of relying on a smaller workforce to pay for public-sector programs.

- A productive workforce is critical to generating the resources to support a growing population of retirees and the future success of our economy.

- Economically secure families, healthy children, and high quality early care and education play an important role in preparing children for success.

Our children are a key resource in building an economically strong future.
Child Poverty
Toxic Impact of Poverty

• What is child poverty and why does it matter?
• Individual & Civic, Short & Long Term Harms
• Dramatic increase during recession
  – More than one 1 of every 7 Connecticut children lived in poverty in 2012

The longer society waits to intervene in children’s lives, the more costly and difficult it becomes to make up for early setbacks.
About 1 in 8 children in Bristol and 1 in 10 in Plainville live in poverty.

Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-year estimates DP03
Part Two: Targeted Investments for Healthy Childhood Development
To change the course in child poverty, we need to make strategic investments in programs and services that work.

✓ Families
✓ Education
✓ Health
Family Economic Security

Families below poverty level struggle to make ends meet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Family</th>
<th>Poverty Threshold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Person</td>
<td>$11,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two People</td>
<td>$14,937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three People</td>
<td>$18,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four People</td>
<td>$23,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five People</td>
<td>$27,827</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Impoverished families mean impoverished children and communities.

www.ctvoices.org
Family Economic Security
High unemployment still plagues Connecticut

Unemployment means less stability for children and families.

Source: CT State Department of Labor

2012 Unemployment Rate

- 6.3%
- 9.5%
- 8.6%
- 8.1%
- 8.7%
- 7.1%
- CT: 8.4%

CT State Department of Labor
Targeted Investments: Family Economic Security
Make Work Pay with Earned Income Tax Credit

• The EITC gets and keeps people working.
  — Can only be claimed by people who earn income through work. Beginning with the first dollar, a worker’s EITC grows with each additional dollar of earning until the credit reaches maximum value.

• The EITC is a proven anti-poverty tool.
  — In 2011, the federal EITC kept 61,000 people in Connecticut above the poverty line, including 35,000 children.

The EITC lifts children and families out of poverty.
Targeted Investments: Family Economic Security

EITC (cont’d)

EITC By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Households Claiming EITC</th>
<th>Average Credit Amount</th>
<th>Average Income of Filer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>181,620</td>
<td>$601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>3,290</td>
<td>$585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>$437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plainville</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>$487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>$519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southington</td>
<td>1,273</td>
<td>$479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolcott</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>$516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CT Department of Revenue Service

Over 6,500 hard-working, low-income Main Street Families achieved greater economic security.
Targeted Investment: Family Economic Security
Children need healthy food for future success

• Children who do not have enough to eat wind up with diminished capacity to learn and thrive.
• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps low-income families afford the cost of food, and provides education about nutrition.
  - For a single parent with two children to receive SNAP, the income standard is $1,293/month, less than $20,000/year
  - Nearly 225,000 CT households saw a drop in SNAP benefits November 1
  - Could lead to 17 million fewer meals

Food assistance programs support children’s healthy development.
Targeted Investment: Family Economic Security

Families in Main Street rely on SNAP

Families with Children Using SNAP

1 in 7 Bristol and Plainville families with children eat healthier with SNAP.

Source: American Community Survey 07-11 Estimates, B22002

www.ctvoices.org
Targeted Investments: Family Economic Security

Affordable Rental Housing

Households (Income <$50,000) Paying ≥ 30% on Rent

Rental housing is expensive and/or in short supply in Burlington.

Source: American Community Survey, 2007-2011 5-yr table B25106
Education
Third Grade Reading is an important indicator

• Alienation from school
• Four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. (Annie E. Casey)
• Interventions for struggling readers after third grade are often not as effective as those in the early years.

Invest in education early for future success.

www.ctvoices.org
Education

Achievement gap seen in test scores

3rd Grade Reading at/Above Goal

Students in towns with more poverty score lower on standardized tests.

CT: 56.9%

Source: CT State Department of Education
Education

Higher drop-out rates in lower-income communities

Annual Dropout Rate 2009-10

Source: CT State Department of Education

High school graduates make higher future earnings and are less likely to be unemployed.
Targeted Investment: Education
High-quality early care and education crucial for academic success

- Achievement gap already present at kindergarten.
- Preschool attendance make the greatest difference for low-income and at-risk children.
- High-quality early care and education can be powerful counters to risk factors that cause some children to start kindergarten at a disadvantage from which they never recover.

Every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education means greater savings later on.
Targeted Investment: Education
Need for more high-quality subsidized slots

• Not enough slots
  – 30% of 3 and 4 year olds and 84% of infants and toddlers living in families earning under 75% of the State Median Income did not receive any kind of subsidized early care and education.

• Costs for high-quality care are prohibitive
  – The average yearly cost for full-time care for a preschooler in a licensed child care center is $10,954. (211 Child Care)
  – For a family with a preschooler and a toddler in center-based care, average annual child costs would reach $24,131. For a family of three earning the state median income, this would represent 28% of their pre-tax income devoted to child care. (Connecticut Alliance for Basic Human Needs)

Not all students who need quality early care and education have access.
Targeted Investment: Education

Ensure high-quality, universal Pre-K

Kindergarteners with Pre-K Experience

Kindergarteners Retained

CT: 80.1%

CT: 3.4%

Source: CT State Department of Education

Access and quality both important.
Targeted Investment: Education
Support coordinated system for high-quality ECE

• Office of Early Childhood
• “One-stop shop” for quality early care and education
• Governor signed by Executive Order, need legislature to pass
Targeted Investment: Education
Support policies that keep kids in school

- Children learn best when they are in school.
- Excluding children for disciplinary reasons is ineffective and counterproductive.
- Arrests and juvenile justice system involvement harms individual and society.
- Cost to society of career criminals, heavy drug users, and high school dropouts estimated per individual at $2 million, $523,000 to $1.4 million, and $400,000.

Arrest doubles the probability of dropout, and fuels entrance into the juvenile justice system.
Targeted Investment: Education
Support policies that keep kids in school

Arrests happen across socioeconomic lines and often for typical student behavior.

Source: CT State Department of Education

www.ctvoices.org
Targeted Investment: Education
Support policies that keep kids in school

- School-Police Collaboration Bill
- Will appear in legislative session this year with broad bi-partisan support
- Defines school arrest and collects data
- Creates memorandum of agreement between school and police to determine appropriate disciplinary responses

School-Police Collaboration Bill keeps kids in schools and collects the data we need for better decision making.
Health
Good coverage for kids & families in Connecticut

• In Connecticut, the Medicaid program for children and families (HUSKY A) covers:
  – Children under the age of 19 in families with income up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (for a family of 4, $43,567/year)
  – Pregnant women in families with income under 250% FPL (for a family of 4, $58,875/year)
  – Parents or relative care givers in families with income up to 185% FPL
  – Youth in foster care up to age 21 (if in care at age 18)

Publicly funded health care is crucial to keep many parents and children in CT healthy.
Health

Good coverage for Connecticut kids & families

- In CT, 8.9% of the population under 65 is uninsured.
- In Main Street communities, 7.7% of the population under 65 is uninsured.
  - Bristol 10.0%
  - Southington 6%
- In CT, 3.2% of the population under 18 is uninsured.
- In Main Street communities, 3.0% of the population under 18 in uninsured.
  - Bristol 2.6%
  - Southington 3.0%
- These numbers represent significant decline in uninsured, despite recession and increased poverty.

Low rates indicate success of state and federal policy reforms aimed at improving access to health care.
Health

Troubling Trends in Asthma

Asthma ER Visits per 10,000 children

Ensure that children have health insurance to prevent asthma ER visits.
Health
Lack of Pre-Natal Care threatens health of pregnant women & infants

Better than state average, but many pregnant women still lacking pre-natal care.
Targeted Investment: Health
HUSKY coverage for low-income infants & moms

• Medicaid provides crucial pre-natal and infant care.
• Regular prenatal screenings can identify problems early.
• For women with existing risk factors, active monitoring and treatment to control the conditions during the prenatal period are especially important.

Covering pregnant women & new parents means healthier infants and children in the future.
Ensure that eligible pregnant women and infants have Medicaid coverage.
Targeted Investment: Health
Parents and Children should be covered together

• Governor has proposed reducing eligibility for some HUSKY parents.

• When whole families are covered together the number of children who are insured and have access to care is much higher.
  – Insured children with uninsured parents are nearly 2.5 times more likely to experience a gap in insurance coverage, and are at greater risk of having unmet health care needs.
  – A child with publicly insured parents is about 8 times more likely to be enrolled in public coverage compared to a child whose parent is uninsured.

Maintain parent eligibility – when parents are covered, children are more likely to be covered.
Part 3: Specific Policy Recommendations, Next Steps & Discussion
Next Steps
Policy and advocacy recommendations

Family Economic Security

— Support and strengthen programs like the Earned Income Tax Credit that make work pay
— Support and strengthen programs like SNAP that keep kids well-fed and alert

Children exist in families, and economically secure families mean economically secure children.
Next Steps
Policy and advocacy recommendations

Education

– Support measures for high-quality early care and education, like increasing the number of high-quality slots and passing the Office of Early Childhood legislation

– Support measures that keep students in school where they belong, like the School-Police Collaboration Bill

Investing in high quality early education pays for the future.
Next Steps
Policy and advocacy recommendations

Health

— Support services that keep kids and families both covered, like maintaining Medicaid coverage for HUSKY parents under 185 percent of FPL

— Support services that ensure eligible pregnant women and new mothers are covered early in pregnancy, and ensure that eligible women are enrolled.

Publicly funded health care coverage keeps Connecticut’s kids and moms healthy
Next Steps
Exploring the data and takeaways

- Every Community needs focus in different areas
  - Taken as a whole, Main Street Communities are doing better than CT average
  - Bristol shows highest overall need
  - Plymouth and Plainville demonstrate worrisome trends
  - Wolcott shows highest number of student arrests

Data starting point for digging deeper and asking questions.
Questions?

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