

**The Administration for Children and Families** (ACF), within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), administers programs which promote the economic and social well being of families, children, youth, individuals, and communities. Through its federal leadership, ACF supports strategies and creates opportunities for low income and disadvantaged families and individuals to increase their economic independence and productivity, and to build strong, healthy, supportive communities.

**Kent Wilcox** is the Chicago Regional Administrator of ACF. The Chicago Region is comprised of six states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. In his capacity as Regional Administrator, Mr. Wilcox partners with state, local, community based organizations, and tribes within the Chicago Region to promote economic independence and healthy development of children and families. He provides executive leadership and direction to ensure coordination and integration of activities among ACF programs. Brief descriptions of those programs follow.

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families** (TANF) On August 22, 1996, "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996," signed into law. This is a comprehensive bipartisan welfare reform plan that dramatically changes the nation's welfare system into one that requires work in exchange for time-limited assistance. The TANF program replaces the former AFDC and JOBS programs. In TANF, states and

territories operate programs. Under the new law, Tribes have the option to run their own TANF programs. States, territories, and tribes each receive a block grant allocation, and states have maintenance of effort requirement. (For more information on TANF, call 1-800-843-6154.)

**Child Welfare Services** help state public welfare agencies keep families together. The services are available to children and their families without regard to income. State services include: preventive intervention aimed at keeping children within the home; services to develop alternative placements, such as foster care or adoption if children cannot remain at home; and reunification services so children can return home if possible. HHS/ACF has other programs that address the welfare of children at risk. The Adoption Opportunities program eliminates barriers to adoption and helps to find permanent homes for children, particularly those with special needs, who would benefit by adoption. The Abandoned Infants Assistance program provides grants to help identify ways to prevent the abandonment of children in hospitals and to identify and address the needs of infants and young children, particularly those with acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and prenatal drug or alcohol exposure. (For more information on Child Welfare Services, call 312-814-6800.)

**Head Start** is a national program which provides comprehensive developmental services for America's low-income, pre-school children ages three to five and

social services for their families. Approximately 1,400 community-based non-profit organizations and school systems develop unique and innovative programs to meet specific needs. Grants to conduct Head Start programs are awarded to local public or private, non-profit agencies. At least 10 percent of the enrollment opportunities in each program must be made available to children with disabilities. The Early Head Start program expands the benefits of early childhood development to low income families with children under three and to pregnant women. (For more information on Head Start, call 1-866-763-6481.)

**Child Care and Development Fund** (CCDF) has made funds available to states. This program, authorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, will assist low-income families and those transitioning off welfare to obtain childcare so they can work or attend training/education. (For more information on CCDF, call 1-800-843-6154.)

**Child Support Enforcement Program** (CSE) program is a federal/state partnership which promotes family self-sufficiency by securing regular and timely child support payments. State CSE programs locate parents, establish paternity, establish and enforce support orders, and collect payments. Welfare reform legislation that President Clinton signed in 1996 provides strong measures for ensuring that children receive the support due them. Tough new penalties, such as license revocation and seizure of

assets, will be available when child support obligations are not met. The 1996 legislation also recognizes the importance to children of access to their non-custodial parent. Child Support Enforcement services are available automatically for families receiving assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and they are also available to families not receiving TANF. (For more information on Child Support, call 1-800-447-4278.)

**Community Services Programs** Through Community Services programs, the federal government provides annual funding to states, territories, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, universities, and other non-profit groups to assist low-income people in local communities. Community Services funds, including the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), are primarily used to meet employment, education, housing, income management, energy, health, and emergency needs of the poor. (For more information on Community Services Programs, call 1-877-411-9276.)

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** With LIHEAP funds, the federal government provides grants to states, territories, Native American tribes, and tribal organizations that wish to assist low-income households in meeting the costs of home heating and cooling needs. Payments may be made directly to eligible households or to home energy suppliers who comply with legislative provisions. LIHEAP funds can also be used by grantees to help low-income households deal with energy-

related crises or pay for repairs to make their homes more energy efficient. (For more information on LIHEAP, call 1-877-411-9276.)

**Developmental Disabilities** programs serve nearly four million Americans. Developmental disabilities are severe, chronic disabilities attributable to mental or physical impairment, or a combination of both, which are manifested before age 22; are likely to continue indefinitely; and result in substantial limitations in major life activity. (For more information on DD Programs, call IL Council on DD - 217-782-9696 or in Chicago, IL - 1-312-814-2080)

**Youth Programs** Enacted in 1974 under the Runaway Youth Act, and subsequently expanded to include homeless youth, this program was created in response to widespread concern about the alarming number of runaways who cross state lines and are exposed to exploitation. Today an estimated 500,000 to 1.5 million young people run away from or are forced out of their homes, and an estimated 200,000 are homeless. Grants to public and private agencies provide short-term shelter, crisis intervention, and family reunification services to runaway and homeless youth and their families. The national Runaway and Homeless Youth Program also encompasses the Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth which assists homeless youth aged 16 to 21 in making the transition to independent living. (For more information on RHY Programs, call 1-800-621-4000.)



## U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



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