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Letter From The President Susie Cummins



Sharing Information Is an Important Benefit

Networking and sharing information with other human service professionals is one of the greatest benefits of being a NEW: PATHS member. Recently, past national board member, Susan Fay Crockett, started an important conversation about budget shortfalls and state/county cutbacks. The news was somber and brought home the nationwide issues we face. However, it was comforting to see the bigger picture by hearing from other professionals who have the same issues and concerns. I thought you might like to hear what we learned.

As of March 2009:

- Alaska** – The State of Alaska currently has a hiring freeze, with exemptions. The state is also paying close attention to purchases and travel.
- Contra Costa County, CA** – 243 workers were laid off at the end of December, possible cuts in salaries and furlough days
- Kern County, CA** – Hiring freezes are in effect, but no layoffs so far
- Idaho** – Tax revenues for FY 2009 and 2010 are millions less than previously anticipated. As a result, a hiring freeze is in place and every state employee is required to take at least 24 hours of leave without pay.
- Indiana** – The State has a hiring freeze and no raises, but the private side is hiring and raises were given
- Michigan** – Hiring freeze is in effect except for critical positions and there is talk of layoffs
- North Carolina** – Huge budget deficits and many counties have enacted a hiring freeze. Counties are considering ways to cut deficits including possibly letting go of workers in revenue producing positions.
- North Dakota** – One of three states with a surplus budget; energy (wind & oil) have been instrumental in the surplus development
- Virginia** – Locally, in Arlington, social services has laid off 40 staff persons (fortunately none in eligibility), there is a hiring freeze, salaries are frozen, and there is a moratorium on travel related spending.
- Wisconsin** – Administrative budget cuts; existing staff have huge increases to caseload sizes due to economic downturn
- Wyoming** – Currently has a budget surplus; there is no hiring freeze; employees are anticipating a 4% raise this year; each agency was asked by the Governor to present a 5% - 10% budget decrease.

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All states that provided feedback report an increase in applications because of all the layoffs happening. The following quotes say it best:

"I'm still very happy to have a job that I enjoy and to be surrounded by people like all of you to "cry" with!" JoLynn Cagle, Alaska

"I thank God every day for my job, home, health and my family. My heart goes out to you all." Geri Zeimens, Wyoming

"Now more than ever, your membership with NEW: PATHS is very valuable. NEW: PATHS provides an opportunity for members to professionally network as we strive to address the needs of the citizens of our country. These are not easy times, but together we will do what needs to be done. We are citizens of the United States of America. United we will make things better. NEW: PATHS can provide the support system/tools for you to do your part." Susan Fay Crockett, North Dakota

The year 2009 is going to be very challenging. The slow economy is generating more and more people who need assistance, and it is also causing budget shortfalls. As a result, now more than ever, Human Service professionals are being asked to do more with less. It is in times like these that we need to stick together and support each other. NEW: PATHS is an excellent way to stay connected with professionals who understand all of the trials and tribulations associated with the job. This can be done by staying involved in your state and local chapters. If you are a member but don't have a chapter, you can contact National NEW: PATHS by e-mailing new@nationalnew.org to find out if there are other members in your area. There is also information on how to start a chapter at www.nationalnew.org. Click on Join NEW and then the link titled "[New Paths Chapter Handbook](#)".

Remember, this year's National Training Conference in New Orleans will be an excellent opportunity to network, gather ideas and information and mingle face to face with other human service professionals. We hope to see you in New Orleans! As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please contact one of your NEW: PATHS National Board members. Thank you for all you do!

Legislative Survey Results

By Donnie Munson

The legislative committee solicited several states to participate in a survey. The survey consisted of eight questions. Our survey questions were designed to offer insight into the differences, similarities between states, how programs are administered, and what programs are offered in each state. The states responding and represented in this survey are California, Wyoming, New Mexico, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Tennessee, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, Alaska, West Virginia and Idaho.

The survey asked if your home state used Simplified Reporting for FNS eligibility. Thirteen states said yes while 1 said no. Another question asked if your state privatized administration of any of their programs. Two states said yes while 12 said no. Indiana answered yes to all of their programs. New Mexico answered yes to all of their programs that their work programs were privatized. Another question asked if your state had to restrict eligibility for Medicaid in the past 3 years? Five states said yes while 9 said no. Among those that said yes, Alaska froze benefit levels, California restricted undocumented non-citizens, North Dakota started co-payments and Tennessee eliminated spend down for adults over 21. Nine states noted that they use diversion programs for their TANF clients while 4 said no.

Other questions included: "Does your state allows child care assistance payments to families attending school and not working. Eight states said yes while 3 said no. Seven states answered yes to the survey questions asking if your state exempts licensing requirements for children if cared for in their own home, while 5 answered no. One question asked if your state operates a year long LIHEAP (Fuel Assistance Program); 5 said yes while 9 said no. Of those saying no, 8 states noted that they do offer fuel assistance programs; just not year long fuel assistance programs. The last question asked if your state utilizes electronic benefit systems for TANF (11 - yes and 2 - no), FNS (14 - yes), Medicaid (7 - yes and 6 - no) and Child Care (3 - yes and 9 - no).

The Legislative committee appreciates all of the states that participated in this survey. We hope that information is useful as it is very important to learn about each other and how we do business around the country. We all administer human services programs, but the way in which we do it varies. We hope the information obtained from this survey enlightens members and chapters as to how similar yet different we truly are from state to state.

Our survey questions were designed to offer insight

Patricia Rivers — Board Member Profile



I am a native of Georgia (Wrightsville). I married and migrated to the Metro (Washington) DC area almost 14 years ago. I have one adult child and I am the middle child of nine. I love children and the elderly. I love to explore different things and different places, great music, hanging out with family and friends, and meeting new people.

I have been an eligibility worker for almost 26 years and I truly love what I do for a living. My dream is to one day win the lottery. Among numerous other ideas I would develop a chain of combination nursing home/daycare facilities from coast to coast with exceptional standards to serve some of our most needy, worthy, and deserving citizens. I think that they could both benefit tremendously from such a union.

Keynotes, Workshops and "All That Jazz" at the NEW: PATHS Training Conference in New Orleans

We are proud to announce that our Opening Keynote speaker will be Dr. Teresita Castro-McGee from the UC Davis Center for Human Services. The always popular Mrs. Castro-McGee will be returning to us after a hiatus of several years, to provide our opening keynote plus she will also be providing 2 workshops for us. Teresita has presented before at our conferences and is always popular, very informative and interesting to listen her speak.

Our Closing Keynote speaker is Randy Morgan who comes highly recommended by the Alaska Chapter and will also be providing 2 workshops. In addition, Past President, Pam Harrison will lead a workshop entitled "A

CASEWORKER BY ANY OTHER NAME" where you can share your states processes for intake, caseloads, etc.

We are planning to hold the Town Hall and workshops with our Federal partners in TANF, Food Stamps/ SNAP, Adult Medicaid and Children and Families Medicaid. APHSA Director Jerry Friedman has also been invited.

It is early in the Federal budget year so we have not been able to confirm that we will again have the Town Hall meeting with breakout sessions for TANF, Food Stamps/ SNAP and Medicaid but please stay tuned and check out the web site and future newsletters for the conference program progress.

We look forward to seeing you in New Orleans !

We Need You In New Orleans



If you will be attending the conference in New Orleans, please consider signing up to be a workshop Monitor or Moderator. The responsibilities are not difficult or time consuming and you will be sure to see a workshop that you want to see. You will be rewarded with a chocolate treat for your efforts! Volunteering for a specific workshop gives you the advantage of a front row seat and interaction with the presenter.

For more information, contact Mary Beth Gehrke at 920-729-2772 or mgehrke@co.winnebago.wi.us A short information session will be held on Sunday evening "8/16/09" prior to the beginning of the night's activities.

UC Davis and NEW: PATHS are Partners!

by Jennifer Sipe

The External Relations and Professional Development committees are working with the University of California at Davis on a long term relationship that will provide attendees with Keynote Speakers and workshops during conferences that will give attendees Continuing Education Units (CEU). In many State/Counties an affiliation with an accredited institution is necessary to use Tuition Reimbursement.





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National Eligibility Workers Association
Professionals Associated Through Human Services

We're on the Web —
<http://www.nationalnew.org>

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 PROFESSIONALLY WE
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WANTED!

TO RUN FOR OFFICE:

A NEW: PATHS member in good standing
 Who likes to travel
 Who is not afraid of "a little work"
 Who believes the eligibility profession is a rewarding career and deserves more recognition.

See www.nationalnew.org for more information

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Save the Date


*NEW: PATHS 34th annual training conference
 will be August 16th - August 19th, 2009
 at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel*



Space Available

Announcing an opportunity for you at the 2009 NEW: PATHS conference in New Orleans August 16th-19th: Do you have a product to sell or advertise? Or maybe you have a program or service that you want others to hear about.

NEW: PATHS chapters can reserve a table at no charge. There may be a fee for other vendors/exhibitors. For more information contact Jennifer Sipe at sipej@saccounty.net or call 916-875-3731.



Going Paperless! Would you like to be the first on your block to receive your Directions newsletter? Have you considered the advantages of receiving your copy of Directions electronically? The paperless solution will help you to store your newsletter in an easy to retrieve convenient file, which you can easily locate and retrieve whenever you require. You also save money on furniture, paper, ink cartridges, and time, not to mention the obvious environmental benefits.

We are looking at the possibility of adding this option in the near future. If you think the paperless option is for you, please let us know by sending an email, from the email address to which you want the newsletter sent to Directions@Nationalnew.org with a yes by July 1, 2009.

The results of this survey will be in the next Directions newsletter.

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