



NH Local Welfare Administrator's Association

c/o Cornerstone Association Management
53 Regional Drive, Suite 1
Concord, NH 03301

Towards self-sufficiency...

April 29, 2015

Senator Jeanie Forrester, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
107 North Main St., Room 103
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Senator Forrester and Senate Finance Committee Members,

Our organization, NHLWAA, is comprised of local welfare officials throughout the state. Each city and town is mandated to have a welfare official per RSA 165:1. All administrative costs as well as aid expenditures are funded by the local property taxpayer of that city or town. When state programs that assist our elderly, disabled, low-income wage earners and homeless families and individuals are not adequately funded, the financial burden shifts to the municipalities to support those in need.

We understand the difficult choices that are ahead of you as you work on the budget. Our concern is that the budget as presented now will further burden the local property taxpayers as services are reduced for those in our state that do not have the means to meet basic needs. We hope that as you make decisions on the budget that you will keep in mind the impact of downshifting costs to local property taxpayers through increased demand on local welfare offices.

Specifically, we are concerned with the proposal to let the NH Health Protection Plan sunset on 12/31/16. This would leave the more than 37,000 residents without much needed health coverage and there would be a financial impact on our communities, our hospitals and our workforce. The cost of prescription medications would once more become the responsibility of the local welfare offices.

Other specific concerns are the proposed funding levels for homeless shelters, for programs for those with developmental disabilities and brain injuries needing home and community based care, for programs through adult and elderly services and the level of support for community health centers. We are also concerned with the elimination of Service Link which helps elderly and disabled individuals to navigate the complex Federal programs that support them.

All of the programs above assist our most vulnerable residents to receive assistance that they need to survive. The programs provide shelter and case management for homeless families and individuals, meals for the elderly, services that allow disabled people to remain in their homes, guidance to programs designed to support our elderly and disabled individuals and health care for many. Our already burdened local property taxpayers would see a direct impact on their property tax bill should the safety net of the local welfare offices be forced to expand to provide more assistance to those no longer served due to inadequate funding at the state level.

Thank you for your service to the State of NH and thank you in advance for consideration of these concerns. May you develop a budget that serves all of our citizens without downshifting costs to our local property taxpayers.

Sincerely,


Angela Martin-Giroux, Chair
NHLWAA Legislative Affairs