

Happy New Year!

Congress continues its recess. While the House returns next week, the Senate will not convene until January 22. Most congressional sessions do not begin in earnest until after the State of the Union speech (slated for January 28) and President Bush's submission of his proposed budget on February 4.

This update reminds NACHSA members that the 2008 dues are due and the NACHSA awards applications deadline is next Monday. Human services items of interest crossing my screen in the past month, including two federal grant announcements, are also found below.

While NACHSA discourages forwarding these e-Alerts to non-dues paying counties, please feel free to forward this particular e-Alert to your colleagues in order that we may increase and strengthen membership!

NACHSA News

NACHSA Dues Are Due!: Please take a minute to print out and send your [2008 dues to NACHSA](#). Dues are frozen at the 2005 level. Over the past year, NACHSA members have received numerous congressional and human services resources updates, as well as the opportunity to post [job announcements](#) and interact with colleagues at NACHSA meetings. The popular [NACHSA Networker](#) is now distributed electronically only to NACHSA members. NACHSA also upgraded these updates in a more visually appealing and reader-friendly format.

NACHSA Awards Deadline Next Week: It's not too late to nominate candidates for innovative human services programs and for distinguished leadership by human services directors and elected county officials. NACHSA award winners will be recognized at the National Association of Counties' Legislative Conference in March. [Click here](#) to learn more about the 2008 awards and application process. Applications are due by January 14, 2008.

To view information about past award winners, [click here](#).

Register Now for NACo's 2008 Legislative Conference: NACHSA will meet on March 1 during the conference. [Click here](#) for a draft of some of the NACHSA-related activities at the conference. Registration is now available for the 2008 National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference! Next year's conference will be held March 1-5 at the Hilton Washington and Towers in Washington, D.C. Registration, housing information and updated workshop session information is [now available](#) on the NACo Web site. [Register on-line](#) and save \$25 on your registration fee.

HUMAN SERVICES RESOURCES

Child Welfare

Study Shows Extending Care Past Age 18 May Benefit Foster Youth: In December, the Chapin Hall Center for Children released a [new study](#) which found that extending care to foster youth past the age to 18 might also increase earnings and delay pregnancy. However, when compared to adolescents not in foster care, youth aging out of the child welfare system are faring poorly as a group. A ten page issue brief entitled [When Should the State Cease Parenting? Evidence from the Midwest Study](#) is found on the same link.

Supporting Kinship Families: What State Policymakers Can Do: In mid-December, the National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices partnered with Casey Family Programs to conduct

a webcast on the benefits of kinship care. [Click here to access the materials](#) presented as well as an archive of the broadcast.

Involving Youth in the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) Toolkit: Brought to my attention by a NACHSA member, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, the [2007 CFSR Toolkit for Youth Involvement](#) offers strategies for collaborating with youth in the CFSR.

Is a CFSR coming to you soon? Nineteen states will have CFSRs conducted in the next nine months. [Click here](#) for a list of those states.

Foster Child Behavioral Assessment: Developed in 2007 by the Iowa Dept. of Human Services, this [form provides a checklist](#) to enable child welfare caseworkers to develop a case plan that addresses the individual needs of a child in care, and to determine the level of care and corresponding foster care payment. The form provides a point system for assessing the severity and type of the emotional needs of the child, behavioral care needs, and physical and personal care needs. Points are then calculated into a daily rate for foster care.

Child Welfare Workforce Recruitment, Selection and Retention: Responding to the growing national concerns about staff recruitment and turnover within the child welfare workforce, [Maryland has assessed its current child welfare workforce situation](#). Data was collected to describe the child welfare workforce, to recommend changes, and to create baseline data for evaluating the success of any changes implemented. The study conducted 21 focus groups with 203 case workers and supervisors from across the state, and gathered data through an online survey completed by 561 workers. A 21 page [executive summary](#) is available.

Adoption Assistance Programs

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance State Self-Assessment: Published in November 2007, this HHS [self-assessment tool](#) provides a process by which state Title IV-E agencies may voluntarily review their title IV-E adoption assistance programs. The self-assessment tool is intended only for internal use by state Title IV-E agencies. It is not a federal requirement and states are not required to complete it.

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Eligibility Flow Chart: Prepared by HHS, this recently published [adoption assistance flow chart](#) indicates, through yes or no questions, whether or not a child is eligible for IV-E adoption assistance.

Other Reports

Repeat Teen Childbearing: Although the teenage birth rate has been decreasing since 1991 and reached a record low in 2004, nearly one-fifth of teen births that year were repeat births—births to teens who were already mothers. This [Child Trends](#) research brief provides new information on trends in [repeat teen childbearing by state](#) and by racial/ethnic group to help state-level agencies and local program providers address the needs of these especially disadvantaged teens and their children. The research found that states vary greatly in the percentage of teen births that are repeat births and that this pattern generally mirrors variations in states' overall teen birth rates.

Poverty Facts: The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has published this three-page [snapshot on the state of poverty](#) and hardship. Drawing from federal data and other reports, the snapshot analyzes how the poor are faring in terms of incomes, food availability and health coverage.

Federal Grant Announcements

Assets for Independence Projects: Counties are eligible to apply for HHS grants to establish and administer [Assets for Independence \(AFI\) projects](#). Grantees provide an array of supports and services to enable individuals and families with low incomes to become economically self-sufficient for the long-term. A primary feature of each AFI project is that project participants are given access to special matched savings accounts called Individual Development Accounts (IDA), in which participants save earned income for the purchase of a home, for business capitalization, or to attend higher education or training. Grants will average \$350,000 and 55 to 65 awards will be made. The closing dates are January 15, 2008 and March 25, 2008.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Programs: HHS announced last week the availability of [\\$12.5 million in grants](#) to be awarded to up to 91 applicants to establish or strengthen existing community-based basic center programs (BCPs) that provide temporary emergency shelter and care to runaway and homeless youth. BCPs provide shelter and support services that assist youth in crisis, reunite youth with their families (as appropriate), strengthen family relationships, and help youth transition to safe and appropriate alternative living arrangements where they can become independent, self-sufficient, contributing members of society. Counties are eligible to apply. Proposals are due February 19, 2008.