LINC Commission Meeting

February 23, 2009

Over 400 LINC Caring Communities members visited the Missouri State Capitol for the 2009 Child Advocacy Day on Tues., Jan 27.

LINC
Local Investment Commission

3100 Broadway, Suite 1100 - Kansas City, MO 64111 - (816) 889-5050 - www.kclinc.org

Local Investment Commission (LINC) Vision

Our Shared Vision

A caring community that builds on its strengths to provide meaningful opportunities for children, families and individuals to achieve self-sufficiency, attain their highest potential, and contribute to the public good.

Our Mission

To provide leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system.

Our Guiding Principles

1. COMPREHENSIVENESS: Provide ready access to a full array of effective services.
2. PREVENTION: Emphasize "front-end" services that enhance development and prevent problems, rather than "back-end" crisis intervention.
3. OUTCOMES: Measure system performance by improved outcomes for children and families, not simply by the number and kind of services delivered.
4. INTENSITY: Offering services to the needed degree and in the appropriate time.
5. PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT: Use the needs, concerns, and opinions of individuals who use the service delivery system to drive improvements in the operation of the system.
6. NEIGHBORHOODS: Decentralize services to the places where people live, wherever appropriate, and utilize services to strengthen neighborhood capacity.
7. FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS: Create a delivery system, including programs and reimbursement mechanisms, that are sufficiently flexible and adaptable to respond to the full spectrum of child, family and individual needs.
8. COLLABORATION: Connect public, private and community resources to create an integrated service delivery system.
9. STRONG FAMILIES: Work to strengthen families, especially the capacity of parents to support and nurture the development of their children.
10. RESPECT AND DIGNITY: Treat families, and the staff who work with them, in a respectful and dignified manner.
11. INTERDEPENDENCE/MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY: Balance the need for individuals to be accountable and responsible with the obligation of community to enhance the welfare of all citizens.
12. CULTURAL COMPETENCY: Demonstrate the belief that diversity in the historical, cultural, religious and spiritual values of different groups is a source of great strength.
13. CREATIVITY: Encourage and allow participants and staff to think and act innovatively, to take risks, and to learn from their experiences and mistakes.
14. COMPASSION: Display an unconditional regard and a caring, non-judgmental attitude toward, participants that recognizes their strengths and empowers them to meet their own needs.
15. HONESTY: Encourage and allow honesty among all people in the system.

Monday, Feb. 23, 2009 | 4 – 6 p.m.
Kauffman Foundation
4801 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Mo. 64110

Agenda

I. **Welcome and Announcements**

II. **Approvals**
   a. **January minutes (Motion)**

III. **Corrections**
   a. **KC Crime Commission (Barry Mayer)**
   b. **Missouri Reentry Program (Julie Boehm)**

IV. **Board Governance Manual**
   a. **Bylaws Change (Resolution)**
   b. **Board Approval (Motion)**

V. **LINC Finances – Quarterly Report**

VI. **LINC President's Report**

VII. **Reports**
   a. **High School Senior Job Fair**
   b. **Other**

VIII. **Adjournment**

THE LOCAL INVESTMENT COMMISSION – JAN. 26, 2009

The Local Investment Commission met at the Kauffman Foundation, 4801 Rockhill Rd., Kansas City, Mo. Chairman **Landon Rowland** presided. Commissioners attending were:

Bert Berkley
Sharon Cheers
Jack Craft
Steve Dunn
Herb Freeman
SuEllen Fried
Rob Givens
Anita Gorman
Bart Hakan
Adele Hall
Rosemary Smith Lowe
Mary Kay McPhee
Richard Morris
Margie Peltier
David Rock
David Ross
Gene Standifer
Bailus Tate

Rowland announced that tomorrow is the 27th annual Child Advocacy Day. LINC expects to take more than 300 people from the Kansas City area to Jefferson City to meet with state lawmakers.

Betsy Vander Velde of the Family Conservancy called for a community conversation on incarceration in response to a series of Kansas City Star articles on crime in the 64130 zip code. Discussion followed

A motion to approve the minutes of the Nov. 21, 2008, LINC Commission meetings was passed unanimously.

Gayle Hobbs delivered the LINC President's Report:

- LINC and the Kansas City, Mo. School District have settled the lawsuit over nonpayment of Before & After School services provided by LINC. LINC legal counsel **Rick Bien** reported that LINC is awaiting the district's wire transfer of $1.4 million.
- The election of a new governor has brought many staff changes in the state agencies. LINC continues to monitor the needs of its state partners during the transition. Staff have been able to get Caring Communities contract amendments signed during the transition period.
- U.S. Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan** has been a vocal supporter of expanded education opportunities afforded by community schools. A video featuring his comments on the subject during his confirmation hearing was shown.

LINC Treasurer **David Ross** reported that the LINC Finance and Audit Committee has produced and distributed a draft Board Governance Manual for the Commissioners' review and comment. Commissioners will vote on the governance manual at the February meeting.

Margie Peltier gave an overview of the LINC Health & Aging Committee's efforts to ensure that older adults and the frail elderly can live safely and successfully in the community. Strategies include: studying respite services, convening focus groups, supporting Grandparents As Parents, and building partnerships with Kansas City Partnership for Caregivers and Center for Practical Bioethics.

A video on HomeSharing was shown. HomeSharing matches persons and elderly homeowners who can share their home. LINC has assumed responsibilities for HomeSharing which will operate out of LINC's main offices. HomeSharing board chair **Dale Walker** thanked LINC for providing operational support to HomeSharing.

Discussion followed.

LINC staff **Trent DeVreugd** introduced **John Carney** of the Center for Practical Bio-Ethics. Carney gave a presentation on KC 4 Aging in Community, an initiative to respond to community needs arising out of a growing elderly population. The presentation is available on the LINC website.

Discussion followed.

Paul Wenske of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City reported on a major foreclosure event, organized by Hope Now, on Feb. 26 at Bartle Hall. Participating lenders will send notices to delinquent homeowners and provide an opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss options.

The meeting was adjourned.

In January, the request was made to have a presentation on corrections and community reentry programs at the February meeting.

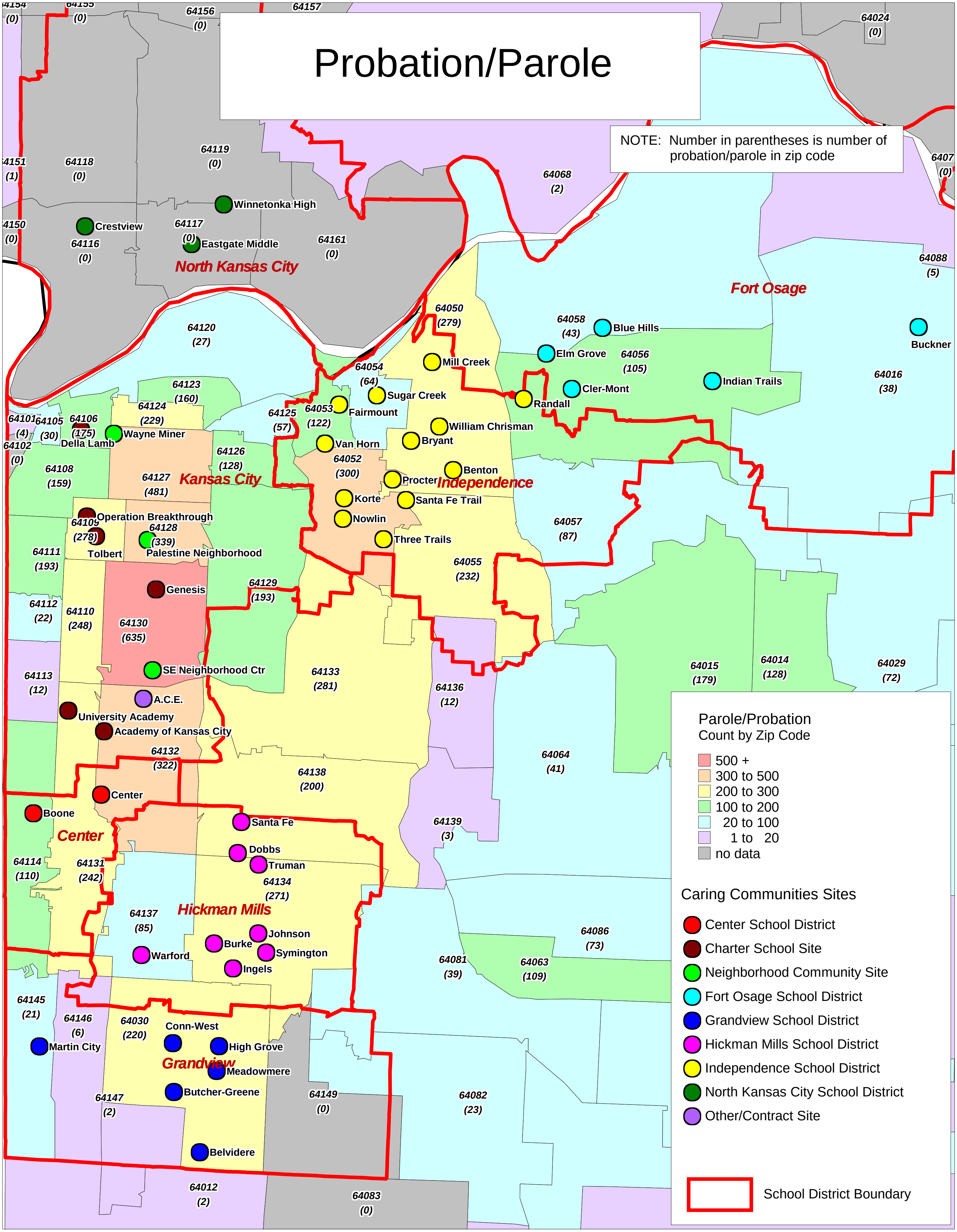
For the meeting, a joint presentation will be made by **Barry Mayer**, vice president of the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission and **Julie Boehm**, Missouri Dept. of Corrections, who leads the Missouri Reentry Process.

LINC has been working on this issue with local Missouri Probation and Parole offices.

The background material includes a map showing number of state probation and parolees by zip code in the Kansas City area. We have also included information showing factors affecting successful reentry into the community.

More information will be provided at the LINC Commission meeting.

Probation/Parole



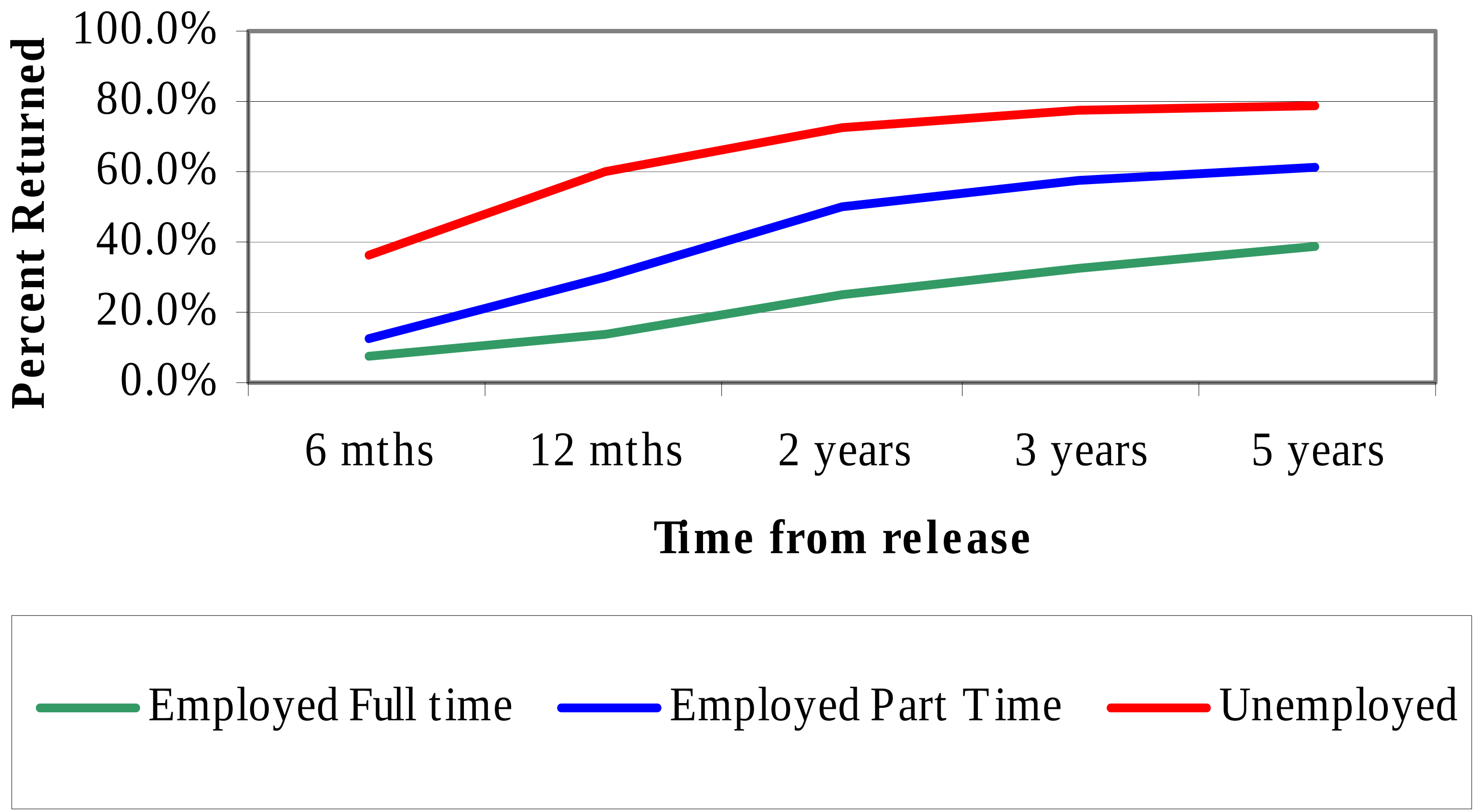
Map created by the Local Investment Commission
3100 Broadway, Kansas City, Missouri, 64111
(816) 889-5050 www.kclinc.org

Data Source: Missouri Department of Corrections

m227a

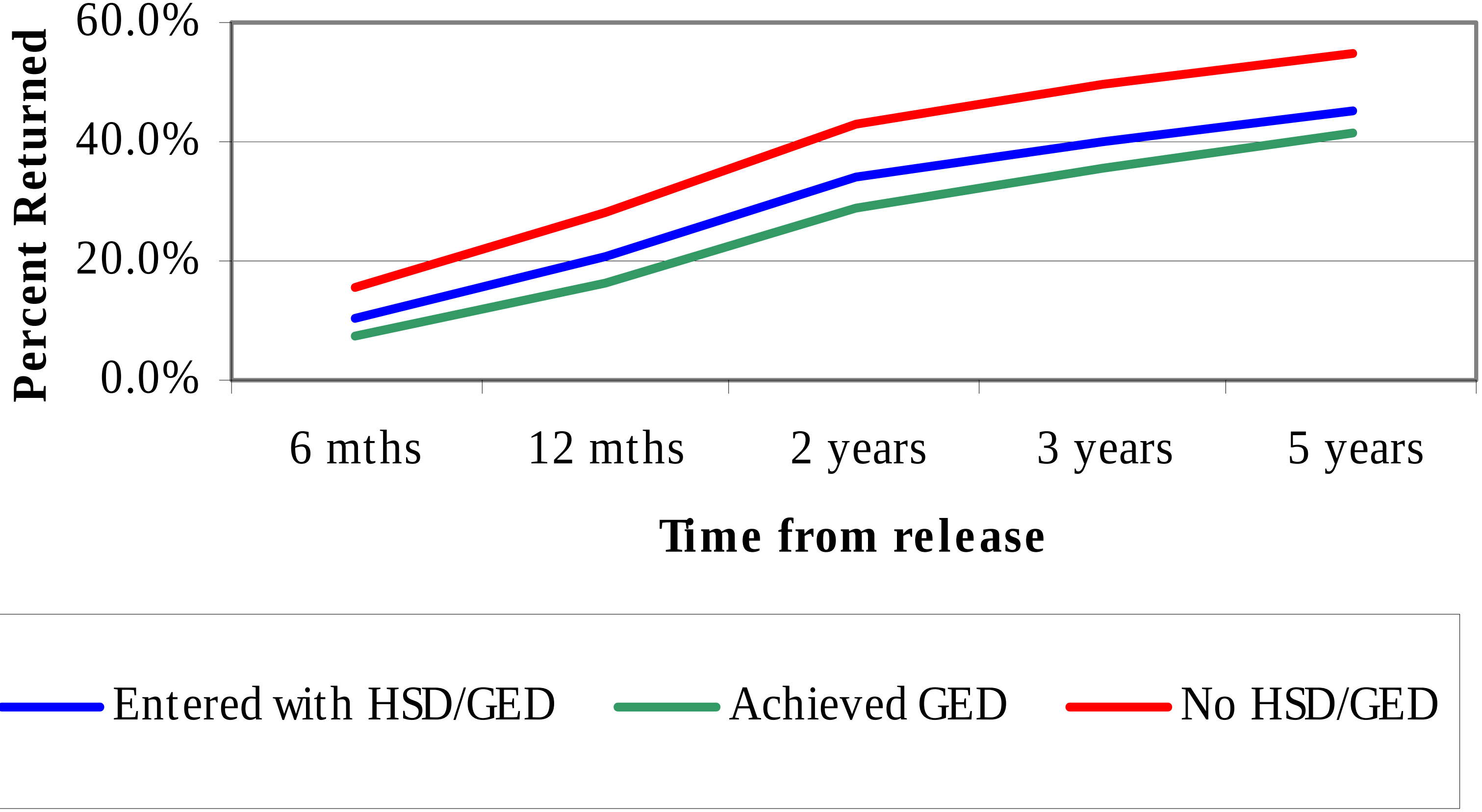
Recidivism and Employment

First Releases FY96 – FY05



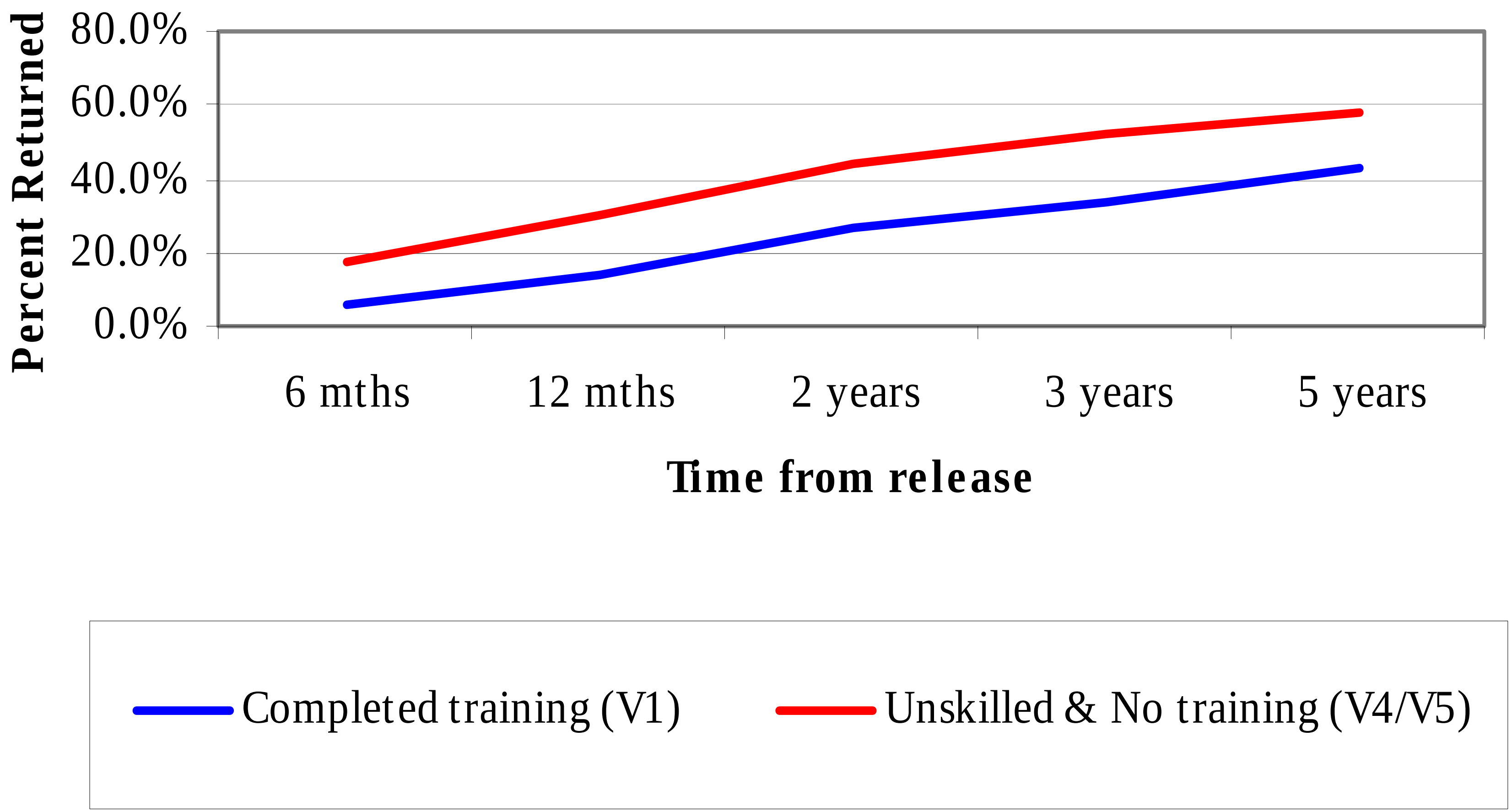
Recidivism and Education

First Releases FY96 – FY05



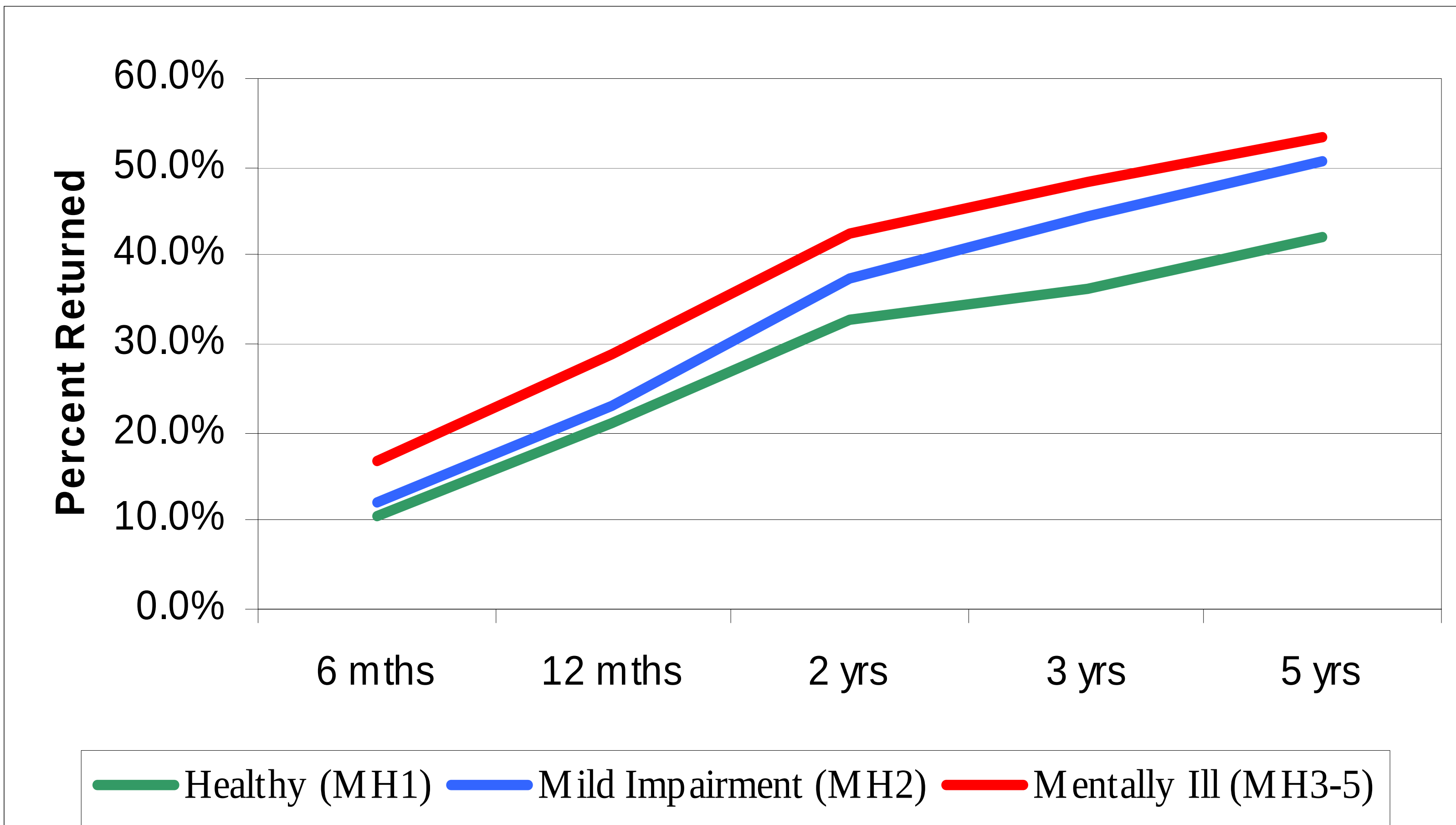
Recidivism and Vocational Training for the Unskilled

First Releases FY96 – FY05



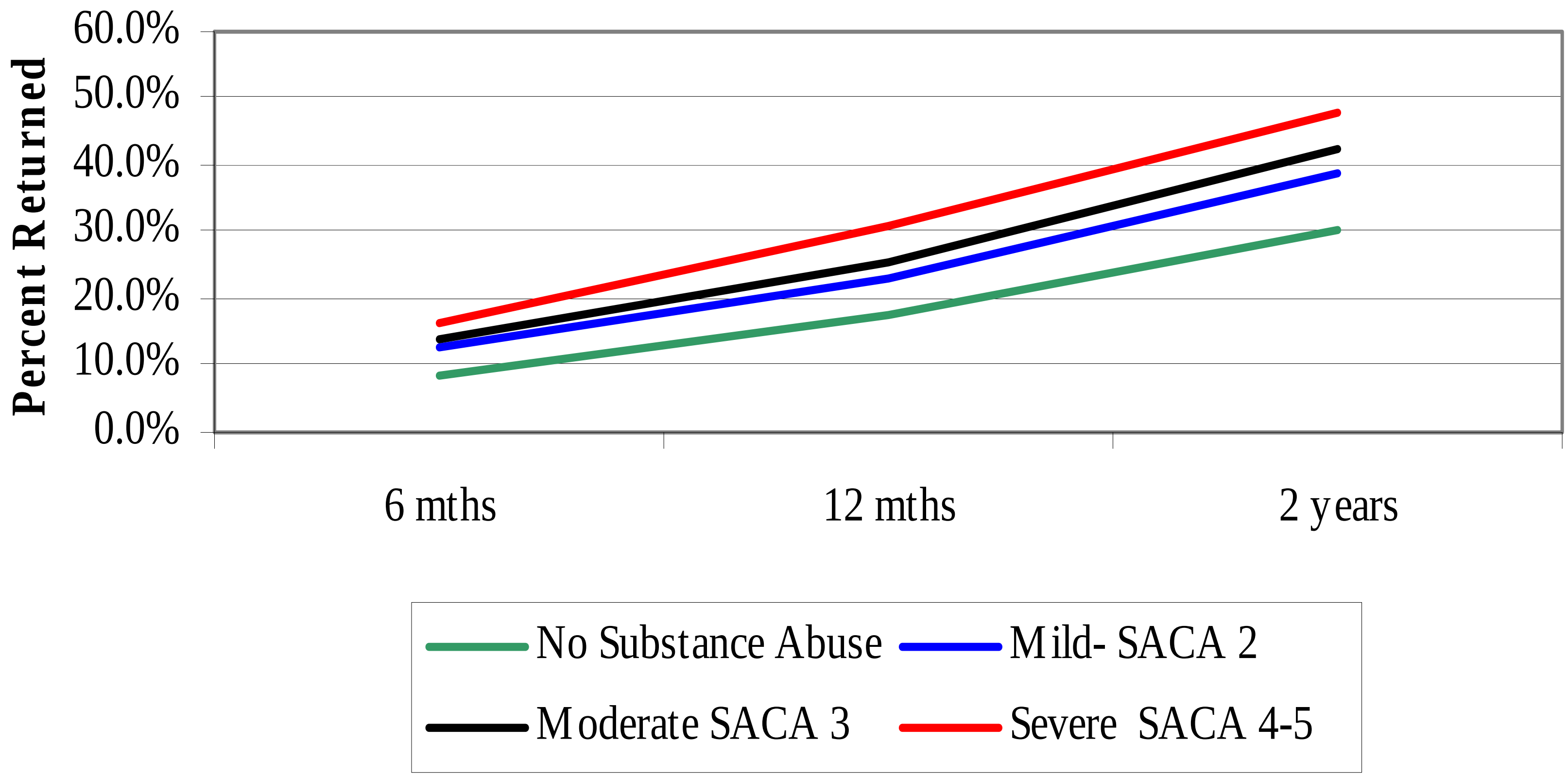
Recidivism and Mental Health

First Releases FY96 – FY05



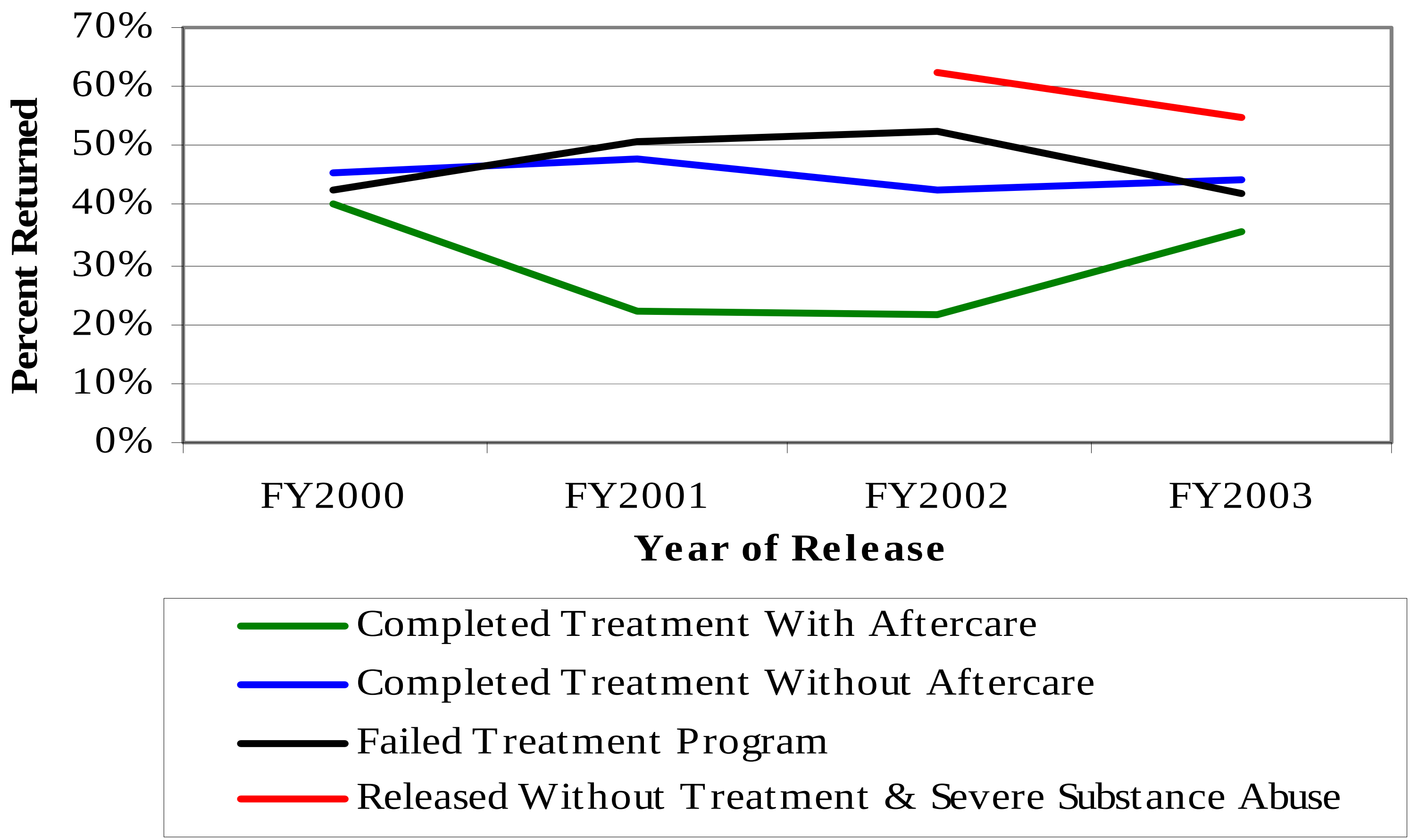
Recidivism and Substance Abuse

First Releases FY02 – FY05



Board Stipulated Long-Term Drug Treatment

Recidivism After 2 Years from Release to Supervision



Recidivism Indicators

Overall Ranking	Classification/First Need Score on Release
1	Maximum Employment Score
2	Substance Abuse at First Need Score
3	Vocational Score on Release
4	Social at First Need Score
5	Mental Health Score on Release
6	Education Score on Release
7	Family at First Need Score
8	Finance at First Need Score

LINC

Board Governance Manual

LINC
Local Investment Commission

3100 Broadway, Suite 1100 - Kansas City, MO 64111 - (816) 889-5050 - www.kclinc.org

Introduction

This board governance manual was developed by the LINC Finance and Audit Committee to aid LINC Commissioners in understanding and fulfilling their legal and organizational responsibilities as the board of directors for a major nonprofit organization.

There is growing interest in organizational effectiveness, transparency and operating in a fashion that gets results and promotes accountability.

Attention to these issues arises in response to changes in nonprofit reporting requirements by the IRS, to heightened governance standards (for both profit and nonprofit organizations) reflected in new accounting practices, and most importantly, to the desire to increase public trust.

Nonprofits are now the third-largest industry in the U.S., and as one that is primarily state-funded, we take seriously our obligations and the opportunity to serve communities in need.

Leslie Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant, in their book *Forces for Good*, make a convincing case that the "next leap" in non-profits will be those that become "catalytic agents of change" that "work within, and change, entire systems."

The authors added: "The most effective of these groups employ a strategy of leverage, using government, business, the public, and other nonprofits as *forces for good*, helping them deliver even greater social change than they could possibly achieve alone."

We believe this is an apt description of LINC at it best.

This manual outlines our commitment to good governance as well as our desire to continue our efforts to truly be a "*force for good*."

Materials consulted in the preparation of this manual include *Guide to Nonprofit Corporate Governance in the Wake of Sarbanes-Oxley*, American Bar Association Coordinating Committee on Nonprofit Governance (2005) and "Best Practices: Nonprofit Corporate Governance," McDermott Will & Emery (2004).

Special thanks go to the members of the LINC Finance and Audit Committee – David Ross, Frank Salizzoni, Rob Givens and Tom Gerke – for their direction and encouragement on the project. LINC staff members involved included Gayle Hobbs, Robin Gierer, Mark Gunter and other LINC staff.

The MISSOURI BUDGET PROJECT

Shaping Policy... Creating Opportunities

January 30, 2009

Highlights of the Governor's Budget Recommendations

Ruth R. Ehresman, Director of Health and Budget Policy

As a result of the current economic recession, state revenues are declining throughout the country. Missouri, along with 45 other states, has just begun grappling with how to adequately fund services while facing significant revenue shortfalls in the current fiscal year (FY 2009 which ends on June 30, 2009) and in the next fiscal year (FY 2010). The Governor's office recently announced that the state expects a $261 million shortfall in the current year, followed by an estimated $400 million shortfall next year.[1] Although the consensus general revenue estimate (agreed to by the Governor and the leaders of the General Assembly) for FY 2010 is slightly higher than revenue for FY2009, it remains lower than FY 2008 (See the table below).[2]

General Revenue Funds – Consensus Estimate as of January 2009

	Actual Revenue FY 2008	*Revised* Estimate FY 2009	Consensus Estimate FY 2010
Net General Revenue Collections	$8.004 billion	$7.687 billion	$7.764 billion
Net Growth Rate		-3.95%	+1.00%

Why is Missouri's Revenue Declining? It's Not Just the Economy

The economy has clearly had an impact on the collection of revenue in Missouri and throughout the nation. However, even prior to the economic downturn, Missouri was expecting a budget shortfall due to an ongoing structural budget deficit.[3] Missouri's revenue crisis, while magnified by the economic crisis, is related in large part to significant erosion of state revenue brought about by policy change to decrease revenue. Tax reductions enacted in the 2007 and 2008 legislative sessions cost Missouri more than $262 million per year when fully phased in. In addition, tax credit redemption grew dramatically from $182 million in 1999 to $500 million in 2008.

Missouri's tax structure has also failed to keep pace with a changing economy, leading to further erosion of the revenue base. One example is Missouri's sales tax base. Consumer trends indicate that over time greater numbers of consumers will utilize the Internet for purchasing of products. Missouri has not yet updated its sales tax structure to allow the state to capture Internet sales in the way that it captures sales on the same products in local shops.

[1] http://governor.mo.gov/newsroom/2009/FY_2010_Consensus_Revenue_Estimate.
[2] The Missouri Budget, Fiscal Year 2010 Summary, January 27, 2009 available at http://oa.mo.gov/bp/budg2010/.
[3] For more information on Missouri's structural budget deficit and it's causes see *"Missouri Faces a Critical Budget Cliff: Ongoing Structural Deficit Places all Services at Risk",* Missouri Budget Project, July 2008, available at www.mobudget.org

The cumulative impact of tax reductions and an outdated revenue structure has led to an eroding revenue base that can not meet inflationary needs to continue to adequately fund basic services. Missouri simply doesn't collect enough revenue to adequately fund basic services such as education, health care and transportation. The structural deficit is a revenue problem, rather than a spending problem. Missouri's spending on services continues to be quite low when compared to other states, ranking 44th lowest nationally in state spending per capita; 44th lowest in spending for K-12 education; and 46th lowest in spending for higher education[4].

The Good News: Temporary Assistance is Likely to be Available

Because almost every state is facing revenue challenges similar to Missouri, the President and Congress are working on an Economic Recovery Package. If enacted, the package will provide Missouri with significant revenue over the next two years to prevent cuts in services, enhance services to help families who are bearing the brunt of the recession, and strengthen the state's infrastructure - all of which will help stimulate the economy.[5] The Governor incorporated some of the expected federal funding in his proposed FY 2010 budget.

The Economic Recovery Package is a short term solution to Missouri's immediate crisis, but will not resolve the ongoing structural budget deficit that the state faces. However, it does provide the state with the time needed for the Governor and General Assembly to address revenue adequacy for the future.

The Governor's Budget Priorities

On January 27, 2009 Governor Nixon gave his State of the State address and laid out his budget priorities for FY 2010. Some of the highlights of the Governor's priorities and areas that received increased funding in his budget include[6]:

Jobs

- Expands tax credits for the Quality Jobs program and the Missouri BUILD program. The Governor did not itemize what the cost of these might be, and challenged the General Assembly to send him a jobs package before the spring break.
- A program to provide low interest loans to small businesses
- $15 million, including $4 million in new funding, for job training
- $53 million, including $6.3 million in new funding, to expand the production of biodiesel fuels
- $40 million to coordinate training of the healthcare workforce
- $167 million, including $3 million in new funding, to maintain the current eligibility level for subsidized child care. This is a critically important support for low income working families.

Elementary & Secondary Education

- $3 billion to fully fund the Foundation Formula
- $403 million for school transportation and food services, including $28 million in new funding
- $30 million for the First Steps program, including $1 million of new funding
- $359 million for early childhood special education, including $30 million in new funding
- $26 million, including $5 million in new funding, for education of children with special needs
- $56 million, including $4 million in new funding, for vocational rehabilitation

[4] Morgan Quitno State Rankings
[5] The package is being debated by Congress at this time. For papers that discuss why funding state services is a critical component of restoring the economy, and on the level of funding that Missouri can expect from the House proposal, go to www.mobudget.org
[6] Ibid at 2

Higher Education

- Colleges received a commitment for funding that is not below the level they received in FY 2009, in return for a promise to not raise tuition. The Governor's budget provides $986 million to 2- and 4-year colleges
- Fully funds the Access Scholarships at $96 million, which includes an inflationary adjustment. Currently, students who attend private schools are eligible for about twice the amount of tax-payer funded scholarships than students attending public colleges. The Governor proposes to change distribution guidelines for these scholarships so that the amount of scholarship for which a student is eligible does not depend on whether he/she attends a public or private college.
- Proposes *Missouri Promise*, a scholarship fund that builds on the *A+ Program*. *A+* provides scholarships to 2 year colleges to students who make, and keep, a commitment to provide community service. *Missouri Promise* will offer an opportunity for students who complete two years of college to complete a 4 year education at the public college of their choice. The Governor's budget adds an additional $26 million to the $25 million for the former A+ *Program*.

Health Care

- The Governor's budget proposes a total of $7.1 billion in funding, including federal state and other funds, for Medicaid services. The amount includes an increase of $361 million to maintain eligibility levels and services in Medicaid (MO HealthNet)
- The budget provides an additional $231 million, including $37 million of general revenue to expand health care for 62,000 Missourians, including 34,000 parents with incomes up to 50 percent of the federal poverty level (or incomes of $762 per month for a family of three) and 27,000 children. No details of the Governor's plan to cover more children are available at this time, however a portion of the funds is expected to be used for outreach to enroll children who are uninsured, but already eligible for, Medicaid or CHIP coverage in Missouri.
- No reductions are planned for Non-Medicaid consumers in the Department of Mental Health, and to seniors or individuals with a disability that are served by the Department of Health & Senior Services.

Fiscally Responsible, Effective Government

- $79 million for a 3 percent pay raise for all state employees (Missouri's state employees are among the lowest paid in any state)
- $96 million to maintain the current health care plan benefit for employees.

Proposed Cuts

In addition to the spending recommendations provided in the Governor's budget proposal, the Governor includes $261 million of cuts or reductions in services. The following table indicates the proposed funding for each Department compared to the last two fiscal years.

Specific Programs Targeted for Cuts

Mid-Year cuts of approximately $261 million are expected in FY 2009 budget. The details of these cuts have not been released at this point. As more information becomes available, the Missouri Budget Project will provide updates. Cuts made in FY 2009 are expected to continue throughout FY 2010.
However, the Budget Summaries available on the Office of Administration's web site provide some detail about the Governor's proposed cuts in FY 2010. The amount of detail available varies by Department/Division. Programs targeted for cuts in comparison to FY 2009 Appropriations include the following:[7]

[7] See summary at the Missouri State web site, in the Office of Administration, Division of Budget and Planning at http://www.oa.mo.gov/bp/budg2010/

Fiscal Year 2010 Governor's Recommended Budget
Includes All Funds (Federal, State and Earmarked)

	FY 2008 Expenditure (in $ millions)	FY 2009 Appropriation (in $ millions)	Governor's FY 2010 Recommendations (in $ millions)
Public Debt	92.2	98.2	92.1
Elementary & Secondary Education	5,115.2	5,347.1	5,407.7
Higher Education	1,124.9	1,267.2	1.344.9
Revenue	455.6	441.6	436.7
Transportation	2,200.1	2,458.2	2,274.2
Office of Administration	274.3	319.1	308.0
State Employee Benefits	786.1	837.4	954.7
Agriculture	49.0	76.7	81.0
Natural Resources	255.0	328.2	320.4
Conservation	139.1	145.5	145.5
Economic Development	233.2	315.8	311.8
Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration	29.9	36.9	37.4
Labor and Industrial Relations	135.6	127.3	146.0
Public Safety	538.9	527.5	527.4
Corrections	597.5	670.1	674.6
Mental Health	1,072.2	1,159.5	1,218.3
Health and Senior Services	801.8	855.2	898.2
Social Services	6,208.0	6,890.1	7,369.9
Elected Officials	113.1	116.6	120.7
Judiciary	181.6	189.9	189.1
Public Defender	34.6	37.2	38.1
General Assembly	31.6	34.6	35.7
Real Estate	138.1	146.6	150.7
Operating supplemental		146.6	
Total Operating Budget	**20,607.7**	**22,573.0**	**23,083.1**

Department of Social Services

Office of the Director: 15.25 FTE (full time employees) in staff reduction

Family Support Division:

- Staff Training is cut by $103,000
- Missouri Mentoring Partnership is cut by $200,000
- Kids Mentoring Program is transferred to the Department of Corrections ($500,000)
- Adolescent Boys' Program is eliminated ($300,000)
- Child Support Field Staff and Operations is cut by $3.1 million
- 3.5 FTE staff reduction

Children's Division:

- Funds to support attaining Accreditation are cut by $2.9 million
- Staff training is cut by $176,000
- Adoption and Guardianship subsidies are cut by $2.5 million
- Residential Treatment and Psychiatric Diversion is cut by $5.9 million
- Iv-E Court contracts are cut by $300,000
- Purchase of child care is cut by $1.5 million
- 2.0 FTE in staff reduction

MO HealthNet Division:

$12.6 million core reduction of the Health Care Technology Fund Transfer

The Governor recommended increases in most areas in the MO HealthNet Division. The most significant increases include:

- $143 million to cover 34,000 parents with incomes up to 50 per cent of the federal poverty level including $14.2 million in general revenue
- $81.8 million to cover an additional 27,609 children, including $22.8 million in general revenue
- $70.6 million for anticipated increases in the pharmacy program, including $10.7 million in general revenue

Department of Mental Health

From the detail available in the budget summary, it appears that most cuts in the Department of Mental Health are in employee (FTE) positions. There is a reduction of 292 FTE in the Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services, and 22 FTE in the Division of Developmental Disabilities. The Missouri Budget Project assumes that these are primarily due to increased privatization of services.

Department of Health & Senior Services

Little detail is available in the Budget Summary for the Department of Health and Senior Services. There is a:

- $6.7 million cut in the budget of the Division of Community and Public Health
- $38.4 million cut in the Division of Senior and Disability Services
- Slight increase in the budget of the Division of Regulation and Licensure, but a cut of 10 FTE.

Additional Departments with Significant Proposed Cuts in Personnel:

Department of Transportation – 339 FTE
Department of Corrections – 134 FTE
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – 114 FTE
Department of Revenue – 113 FTE

The mission of the Missouri Budget Project is to advance public policies that improve economic opportunities for all Missourians, particularly low and middle income families, by providing reliable and objective research, analysis and advocacy. Contact the MBP through our website at www.mobudget.org

KansasCity.com
THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Feb. 17, 2009

K-8 transition leaves small — and expensive — classes

By JOE ROBERTSON - The Kansas City Star

In a matter of seconds, every sixth-grader at Blenheim Elementary School was tangled in one human knot.

Their mission — randomly grasp one another's hands, then unravel into a single circle of held hands without breaking their grips — was challenging. Though not as challenging as you might think for an entire grade.

There were only nine of them.

If only untangling the knots in the Kansas City School District's overloaded budget were as simple.

This week the district begins a series of public workshops to talk through plans to cut perhaps $40 million from a $330 million annual operating budget.

With only a handful of students in her sixth-grade science class at Blenheim Elementary, Ashley Ford is able to devote more time to each student and involve them in problem-solving exercises such as this one on the importance of communication.

Among the many difficulties: How long can Kansas City bear the cost of underenrolled schools while it cultivates programs that could help the district grow?

"You've got to work together!" science teacher Ashley Ford sang out as the giggling sixth-graders ducked and weaved through their jungle of arms. "Communication is vital!"

Ford is a first-year teacher completing her certification as a science teacher at Avila University. On this day she taught the nine sixth-graders, then 10 seventh-graders. Then she headed off to Pinkerton Elementary School for the afternoon to teach there.

The district is in the second year of a three-year transition expanding its K-5 schools to K-8s, adding one grade level per year. Several schools have small numbers in the sixth and seventh grades, but they still need to be served by specialized teachers in math, science, social studies and communication arts.

They're getting middle-school instruction, assures Associate Superintendent Donald Bell.

“But it’s expensive,” he said.

The transition theme is playing out in several venues across the district.

The district is expanding, in increments, two popular programs: the Southwest Early College Campus and the Afrikan Centered Education Collegium Campus. This year, according to official September enrollment counts, Southwest is serving 240 students and the African-centered upper school 176 students in buildings with capacities of more than 700.

Redrawing neighborhood boundaries around the planned K-8 schools posed problems. In balancing the denser elementary grades, some schools ended up with low numbers in the middle grades.

Historically, enrollment has dropped through the upper elementary grades as some families sought other options before children entered middle school. In the five years before the K-8 transition started, eighth-grade enrollment was 20 percent less than first grade. And the district’s general middle schools struggled with discipline problems and poor academic performance.

One of the reasons the district opted for K-8s was that families that like their elementary schools would be more inclined to keep their children in the district through the middle years and into high school.

Blenheim principal Rebecca McKeel thinks her school is making the transition work, though it’s taking creativity by the staff.

Ford doesn’t have a lab or sink, but the teacher brings in materials she needs, like a burner and goggles, McKeel said. They join several desks to create a lab surface.

They offer instrumental music and drama. The staff created extracurricular programs after school for the kids — including a cheerleading squad, a Marching Cobras-inspired drill team and a Stomp-like drumming corps.

The programs motivate students and create more outlets for parent participation.

“Some of them (sixth- and seventh-graders) have been here since kindergarten,” McKeel said. “We build relationships.”

For reassurance, Blenheim can look to its neighboring school, Satchel Paige Elementary, which completed the K-8 transition several years ago.

Four Paige eighth-graders, collected in an otherwise quiet hallway, mostly favored the K-8 experience.

“It’s more level,” Shakala Nevins said.

“She means kids are not out of control,” explained Gerald Martin. “We’re comfortable. I know people here. There aren’t any problems.”

Classes are smaller, Zack Sloan offered, “and you can learn more.”

“All my peers are here,” said Deja Davis, smiling with raised and opened hands. “It’s cool.”

The main thing they miss? Middle-school lockers.

Other issues figure to weigh on the K-8 transition. The district kept specialized middle schools at Lincoln College Preparatory Academy and the Kansas City Middle School of the Arts as magnet programs, and launched Southwest, which starts at sixth grade.

Lincoln’s middle school enrollment has dropped 3.6 percent since 2006-2007 before the K-8 transition began, but the School of the Arts has fallen 36.6 percent over the same span.

Board president Marilyn Simmons wants the district to return some of the former arts-themed elementary schools to K-5s to help feed the remaining middle schools.

Paige principal James Jenkins II hopes that the district will avoid a big reorganization.

Paige's K-8 culture suffered a bit this year when the district had to redraw boundaries because voters allowed the district's easternmost section to switch into the Independence School District, he said.

"We grow our kids," he said. "You try to build a culture. … I've been through my growing pains."

Blenheim will carry on through its growing pains as best it can, said parent leader Tracy Brown.

"We'll make it work," he said. "Whatever hand we're dealt, we'll play it."

Budget workshops
The Kansas City School District will conduct a series of public workshops to give people opportunities to exchange ideas as the district prepares its budget for 2009-2010. All workshops are scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m.

•Wednesday: Garcia Elementary, 1000 W. 17th St.

•Next Monday: Parent Resource Center at Manual Tech, 1215 E. Truman Road

•Feb. 26: Paseo Academy, 4747 Flora Ave.

•March 3: Central High School, 3221 Indiana Ave.

•March 4: Scarritt Elementary, 3509 Anderson Ave.

•March 10: Afrikan Centered Education Collegium Campus, 3500 E. Meyer Blvd.

To reach Joe Robertson, call 816-234-4789 or send e-mail to jrobertson@kcstar.com.

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI SCHOOL DISTRICT

Share your thoughts on the 2010 budget

Public pre-budget workshops planned

The Kansas City, Missouri School District (KCMSD) invites the community to give input on issues related to the creation of the District's Fiscal Year 2010 budget at a series of six upcoming public workshops.

Each event is from 6 to 8 p.m.:

- Feb. 18—Primitivo Garcia Elementary, 1000 W. 17th St.
- Feb. 23—Parent Resource Center, 1215 E. Truman Road
- Feb. 26 - Paseo Academy, 4747 Flora Ave.
- March 3—Central High, 3221 Indiana Ave.
- March 4—Scarritt Elementary, 3509 Anderson
- March 10—African-Centered Education Collegium Campus, 3500 E. Meyer Blvd.

EDUCATION WEEK Schools and the Stimulus

Updated: February 13, 2009

Congress Approves Economic Stimulus Package

By Alyson Klein and Michele McNeil

After days of tense congressional negotiations, Congress today approved a nearly $800 billion economic-stimulus bill that would provide some $100 billion in education funding. President Barack Obama is expected to sign the measure early next week.

The bill, which was crafted by House and Senate lawmakers this week, includes money to help local school districts avoid layoffs and program cuts, boosts funding for special education and programs for disadvantaged students, and offers the prospect of funding for school repairs and modernization, among other elements.

The measure won approval this afternoon from the U.S. House of Representatives on a 246-183 vote, with no GOP support. Later this evening, the U.S. Senate approved the package by a vote of 60-38, with the support of three moderate Republicans.

The amounts for education in the final version of the measure—nearly double the U.S. Department of Education's entire $59.2 billion discretionary budget for fiscal 2009—gives the new administration and the secretary of education "credibility" with the public and with educators, just as Congress is gearing up to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act, Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, said in an interview shortly after House passage of the bill..

"I really think this changes the conversation dramatically," Rep. Miller said. "I think it makes things a lot easier." He said he would like to see reauthorization of the law, which many educators have criticized as underfunded, this calendar year.

Passage of the stimulus package generally came as welcome news to education groups that sometimes find themselves at odds on other policy issues.

"Any piece of legislation this large cannot be perfect," Mary Kusler, the assistant director of government relations for the American Association of School Administrators, said of the compromise crafted by House and Senate conferees. She said she wishes Congress had stuck closer to the U.S. House of Representatives' bill, which included about $140 billion for education. Still, she said, "I'm really excited that the final bill continues to recognize the critical role that education plays in local economies."

Amy Wilkins, a vice president of the Education Trust, a research and advocacy group that focuses on disadvantaged and minority students, said that the final version "not only protects jobs, but also goes a long way to protecting the interests of vulnerable students."

But GOP lawmakers warned that the stimulus package could set unrealistic expectations for future spending, and that it doesn't do enough to spur immediate economic growth.

"The single most important thing we could do for struggling American families would be to pass a fast-acting economic stimulus package that would protect existing jobs while creating new ones," said Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon of California, the top Republican on the education panel in statement released after the House vote. "Unfortunately, the spending package crafted in haste, and in secret, by congressional Democrats fails to focus on this central goal."

Compromise Reached

The compromise agreement, worked out by a House and Senate conference committee, would provide $53.6 billion for a state fiscal-stabilization fund, including $39.5 billion that local school districts could use to avert staff layoffs and programmatic cutbacks and to pay for school modernization, among other purposes.

The stabilization fund would also include $5 billion under the control of the U.S. secretary of education to be given to states as bonus grants for meeting key performance measures in education.

In addition, the fund would include $8.8 billion that states could use for education and for modernization, renovation, and repair of public schools and higher education facilities, but could also direct to public safety and other pressing needs.

The $39.5 billion of the state stabilization fund for schools would first have to be used by states to "backfill" any cuts they have made to both K-12 and higher education, up to fiscal 2008 or 2009 levels. If a state didn't have enough money to make K-12 and higher education whole, the money would have to be spread proportionally between the two.

Money in the stabilization fund would flow to states based on factors such as their populations of 5- to 24-year-olds. Any leftover money after backfilling cuts would flow to K-12 districts based on existing Title I formulas, and could be used for a host of purposes, including school modernization. New construction is not envisioned, congressional aides said.

House Democratic aides say it is hoped that the money will go out before July 1.

States also would have to put in their own money to fund schools up to 2006 levels. But states could seek waivers from the federal Education Department in cases of severe financial hardship.

Within the stabilization fund, a $5 billion incentive fund-administered by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan-would include $650 million for innovation grants to school districts that could be models for best practices. The innovation money would go to local districts, nonprofit organizations, or consortiums of school districts.

The agreement would also provide $10 billion for Title I programs for disadvantaged students, and $3 billion for Title I school improvement grants. And it would provide $11.7 billion for state grants for special education.

In the area of early education and child care, the agreement would provide $1.1 billion for Early Head Start and $1 billion for Head Start, plus $2 billion for the Child Care Development Block Grant.

The compromise agreement also includes $250 million for state data systems, $100 million for teacher-quality state grants, and $200 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund. It also has $650 million for educational technology, such as computers in classrooms.

The final level of education aid in the bill is a middle ground between the roughly $80 billion for education in the Senate version of the measure and the $140 billion approved by the House last month.

School construction funding- a top priority for President Barack Obama and some key lawmakers-remained a major sticking point in negotiations to the end.

The initial versions of the measure included a sizable amount of money for school construction grants-$14 billion in the House and $16 billion in the Senate.

Although that money was included in the version of the bill the House passed Jan. 28, it was jettisoned from a compromise measure that the Senate passed earlier this week. The Senate's compromise bill was crafted to win the support of key moderate lawmakers, who expressed worries that a federally financed school construction program could set what they deemed a dangerous precedent for future spending.

The final House-Senate compromise bill includes lower levels of funding in the state fiscal-stabilization fund and smaller amounts for special education and education technology than in earlier versions.

EDUCATION WEEK Schools and the Stimulus $$$

Commentary

Stimulating the Schools: A Plan for Federal Action

By Pedro A. Noguera & Alan M. Blankstein

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has enormous potential to improve the quality of our nation's public schools. This legislation represents a historic investment in children's futures that could eventually change the very future of this nation. This is an opportunity that cannot be squandered.

Over the last eight years, educational progress in the United States has been modest at best. President Barack Obama's administration will need a bold new strategy for reforming our public schools if they are going to play a more significant role in moving the nation forward. There can be no future for the auto industry, for example, if the schools in Detroit and other manufacturing centers are not capable of educating a new generation of workers to design the cars of the future. In cities and towns across America where jobs are being lost at a dramatic rate, revival of local and regional economies will require strategic investments in human capital. This will be possible only if our schools have highly trained and motivated teachers and a curriculum that provides students with 21st-century skills.

To solve the pressing problems confronting our economy and schools, national leadership by the Obama administration and the teachers' unions will be needed. We have to move the conversation about teacher quality beyond a narrow debate over merit pay and job protection, to one focused more broadly on how to ensure that teachers receive adequate support and training to meet the academic needs of their students, and to ascertain their effectiveness in the classroom.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan may soon have $5 billion at his discretion that could go a long way toward making research-based strategies available to underperforming schools and students who desperately need help. The bill also provides $200 million in funding for districts that want to reward educators for outstanding performance or for taking on additional responsibilities and leadership roles. A portion of the stimulus focuses on training and recruiting outstanding teachers for classrooms that need them most. Too often, the least-experienced teachers have been sent; why not send the best teachers to schools that are struggling?

"We know that America's school systems need more than just money to fix the many problems they face. New approaches to educating children and managing schools and districts are required to bring about the kind of changes we wish to see."

There is another $100 million allocated to address teacher shortages and modernize the teaching workforce. This money could be used to provide training for new teachers to help them improve overall student achievement. These funds should be directed toward enhancing professional-development activities for new teachers, strengthening teacher recruitment and training efforts, and improving the preparation of general education teacher-candidates so they could more effectively teach students with disabilities. In addition to these critical efforts, we need extended site-based mentorship during the first two to three years of service to help increase the likelihood of success and retention for these teachers.

We know that America's school systems need more than just money to fix the many problems they face, and that increased funding alone will not produce better results. New approaches to educating children and managing schools and districts are required to bring about the kinds of changes we wish to see. Policies and systems must be in place to promote best practices in teaching, reward high performers, and provide opportunities for feedback and development for those in need of improvement. We also must ensure that like the countries to which we typically compare ourselves, we provide high-quality early-childhood education, health care, and extended learning opportunities to all children in need. The United States will not be a leader in the 21st century if we continue to ignore the basic needs of vast numbers of children.

Finally, while teacher quality is crucial, sustainable school improvement can only be achieved if there is leadership development on a districtwide basis. We need a new generation of leaders who possess the skills required to engage in "positive deviance"—employing the tactics essential to achieve success within an otherwise failing or mediocre system.

The views expressed here echo sentiments expressed last week at a high-level forum sponsored by the HOPE Foundation. Participants included two former governors, policymakers, and top education leaders. Although those attending came from different backgrounds with opposing perspectives, and from both sides of the aisle, we were able to put aside political differences to focus on the future of this country's young people. We worked hard to identify what we agreed were the six most important education policy actions facing President Obama and members of Congress today. If we can achieve broad consensus on these important issues, our nation's policymakers can and must collaborate as well.

Strong leadership by President Obama and Secretary Duncan will be needed if we expect to see superior academic outcomes and greater accountability for the dollars to be invested. The federal government must send a clear message to the states that failure is not an option. Our children deserve that, and our future as a nation depends upon it.

Pedro A. Noguera is a sociologist and professor of teaching and learning at New York University, in New York City. Alan M. Blankstein is the president and founder of the Harnessing Optimism and Potential through Education, or HOPE, Foundation, in Bloomington, Ind.

The New York Times
February 2, 2009

Welfare Aid Isn't Growing as Economy Drops Off

By JASON DEPARLE

WASHINGTON — Despite soaring unemployment and the worst economic crisis in decades, 18 states cut their welfare rolls last year, and nationally the number of people receiving cash assistance remained at or near the lowest in more than 40 years.

The trends, based on an analysis of new state data collected by The New York Times, raise questions about how well a revamped welfare system with great state discretion is responding to growing hardships.

Michigan cut its welfare rolls 13 percent, though it was one of two states whose October unemployment rate topped 9 percent. Rhode Island, the other, had the nation's largest welfare decline, 17 percent.

Of the 12 states where joblessness grew most rapidly, eight reduced or kept constant the number of people receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the main cash welfare program for families with children. Nationally, for the 12 months ending October 2008, the rolls inched up a fraction of 1 percent.

The deepening recession offers a fresh challenge to the program, which was passed by a Republican Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton in 1996 amid bitter protest and became one of the most closely watched social experiments in modern memory.

The program, which mostly serves single mothers, ended a 60-year-old entitlement to cash aid, replacing it with time limits and work requirements, and giving states latitude to discourage people from joining the welfare rolls. While it was widely praised in the boom years that followed, skeptics warned it would fail the needy when times turned tough.

Supporters of the program say the flat caseloads may reflect a lag between the loss of a job and the decision to seek help. They also say the recession may have initially spared the low-skilled jobs that many poor people take.

But critics argue that years of pressure to cut the welfare rolls has left an obstacle-ridden program that chases off the poor, even when times are difficult.

Even some of the program's staunchest defenders are alarmed.

"There is ample reason to be concerned here," said Ron Haskins, a former Republican Congressional aide who helped write the 1996 law overhauling the welfare system. "The overall structure is not working the way it was designed to work. We would expect, just on the face it, that when a deep recession happens, people could go back on welfare."

"When we started this, Democratic and Republican governors alike said, 'We know what's best for our state; we're not going to let people starve,' " said Mr. Haskins, who is now a researcher at the Brookings Institution in Washington. "And now that the chips are down, and unemployment is going up, most states are not doing enough to help families get back on the rolls."

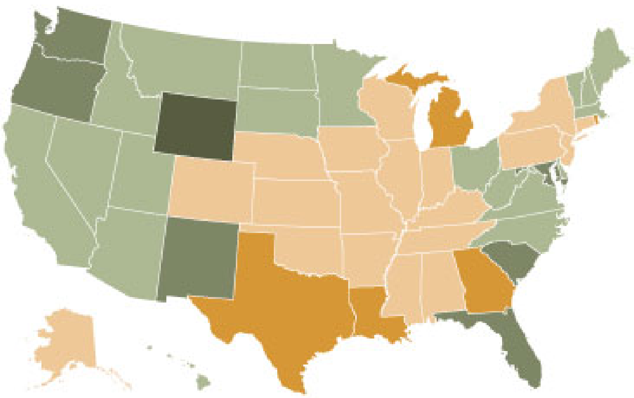
The program's structure — fixed federal financing, despite caseload size — may discourage states from helping more people because the states bear all of the increased costs. By contrast,

Shift in Assistance

Cash welfare assistance has been cut in 18 states, raising questions about the program's ability to respond to rising unemployment during hard times. By contrast, the number of recipients of the food stamp program grew in all states.

	OCT. '07	OCT. '08	CHANGE
Cash welfare recipients	4.24 million	4.25 million	0.3%
Food stamp recipients	26.98 million	30.31 million	12.4%

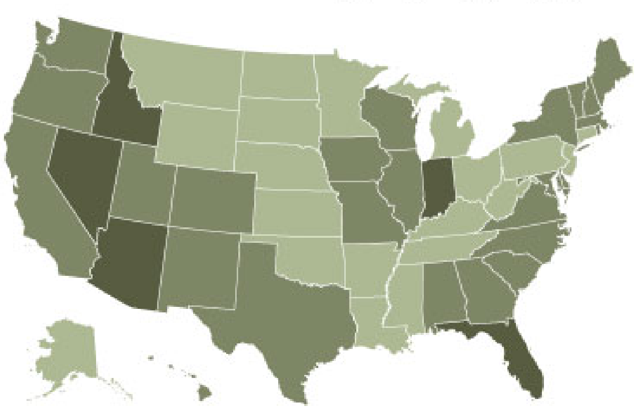
Change in number of cash welfare recipients, from 2007 to 2008



States with largest increase in unemployment

	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE			CASH WELFARE RECIPIENTS
	OCT. '07	OCT. '08	CHANGE	CHANGE FROM '07 TO '08
R.I.	5.1%	9.3%	+4.2	–17.4%
Fla.	4.3	7.0	+2.7	+16.9
Nev.	5.1	7.7	+2.6	+3.5
Idaho	2.7	5.3	+2.6	+0.5
Calif.	5.7	8.2	+2.5	+6.3
Ga.	4.5	6.9	+2.4	–10.9
N.C.	4.7	7.1	+2.4	+3.7
Ariz.	3.9	6.1	+2.2	+0.6
Ala.	3.5	5.5	+2.0	–2.5
Ill.	5.3	7.3	+2.0	–8.1
Tenn.	5.0	7.0	+2.0	–4.7
La.	3.6	5.6	+2.0	–10.5

Change in number of food stamp recipients, from 2007 to 2008



Source: State welfare offices; Bureau of Labor Statistics THE NEW YORK TIMES

the federal government pays virtually all food-stamp costs, and last year every state expanded its food-stamp rolls; nationally, the food program grew 12 percent.

The clashing trends in some states — more food stamps, but less cash aid — suggest a safety net at odds with itself. Georgia shrank the cash welfare rolls by nearly 11 percent and expanded food stamps by 17 percent. After years of pushing reductions, Congress is now considering a rare plan that would subsidize expansions of the cash welfare rolls. The economic stimulus bills pending in Congress would provide matching grants — estimated at $2.5 billion over two years — to states with caseload expansions.

Born from Mr. Clinton's pledge to "end welfare as we know it," the new program brought furious protests from people who predicted the poor would suffer. Then millions of people quickly left the rolls, employment rates rose and child poverty plunged.

But the economy of the late 1990s was unusually strong, and even then critics warned that officials placed too much stress on caseload reduction. With benefits harder to get, a small but growing share of families was left with neither welfare nor work and fell deeper into destitution.

"TANF is not an especially attractive option for most people," said Linda Blanchette, a top welfare official in Pennsylvania, which cut its rolls last year by 6 percent. "People really do view it as a last resort."

The data collected by The Times is the most recent available for every state and includes some similar programs financed solely by states, to give the broadest picture of cash aid. In a year when 1.1 million jobs disappeared, 18 states cut the rolls, 20 states expanded them, and caseloads in 12 states remained essentially flat, fluctuating less than 3 percent. (In addition, caseloads in the District of Columbia rose by nearly 5 percent.)

The rolls rose 7 percent in the West, stayed flat in the South, and fell in the Northeast by 4 percent and Midwest by 5 percent.

Seven states increased their rolls by double digits. Five states, including Texas and Michigan, made double-digit reductions. Of the 10 states with the highest child poverty rates, eight kept caseloads level or further reduced the rolls.

“This is evidence of a strikingly unresponsive system,” said Mark H. Greenberg, co-director of a poverty institute at the Georgetown University law school. Some administrators disagree.

“We’re still putting people to work,” said Larry Temple, who runs the job placement program for welfare recipients in Texas, where the rolls dropped 15 percent. “A lot of the occupations that historically we’ve been able to put the welfare people in are still hiring. Home health is a big one.”

Though some welfare recipients continue to find jobs, nationally their prospects have worsened. Joblessness among women ages 20 to 24 without a high school degree rose to 23.9 percent last year, from 17.9 percent the year before, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Some analysts offer a different reason for the Texas caseload declines: a policy that quickly halts all cash aid to recipients who fail to attend work programs.

“We’re really just pushing families off the program,” said Celia Hagert of the Center for Public Policy Priorities, a research and advocacy group in Austin, Tex.

Some officials predict the rolls will yet rise. “There’s typically a one- to two-year lag between an economic downturn and an uptick in the welfare rolls,” said David Hansell, who oversees the program in New York State, where the rolls fell 4 percent.

Indeed, as the recession has worsened in recent months, some states’ rolls have just started to grow. Georgia’s caseload fell until July 2008, but has since risen 5 percent. Still, as of October the national caseloads remained down 70 percent from their peak in the early 1990s under the predecessor program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

Nationally, caseloads fell every year from 1994 to 2007, to about 4.1 million people, a level last seen in 1964. The federal total for 2008 has not been published, but the Times analysis of state data suggests they remained essentially flat.

Some recent caseload reduction has been driven by a 2006 law that required states to place more recipients in work programs, which can be costly and difficult to run. It threatened states with stiff fines but eased the targets for states that simply cut the rolls.

“Some states decided they had to get tougher,” said Sharon Parrott of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, a Washington research and advocacy group.

Rhode Island was among them. Previously, the state had reduced but not eliminated grants to families in which an adult had hit a 60-month limit. Last year, it closed those cases, removing 2,200 children from the rolls.

Under the new federal accounting rules, that made it easier to meet statistical goals and protected the state from fines.

Michigan also imposed new restrictions, forcing applicants to spend a month in a job-search program before collecting benefits. Critics say the up-front requirement poses obstacles to the neediest applicants, like those with physical or mental illnesses.

“I think that’s a legitimate complaint,” said Ismael Ahmed, director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, though he blamed the federal rules. The program “was drawn for an economy that is not the economy most states are in.”

While food stamps usually grow faster than cash aid during recessions, the current contrast is stark. Many officials see cash aid in a negative light, as a form of dependency, while encouraging the use of food stamps and calling them nutritional support.

"Food assistance is not considered welfare," said Donalda Carlson, a Rhode Island welfare administrator.

Nationally, the temporary assistance program gives states $16.8 billion a year — the same amount they received in the early 1990s, when caseloads were more than three times as high as they are now. Mr. Haskins, the program's architect, said that obliged them to ensure the needy could return to the rolls. "States have plenty of money," he said.

But most states have shifted the money into other programs — including child care and child welfare — and say they cannot shift it back without causing other problems.

Oregon expanded its cash caseload 19 percent last year, so far without major backlash. "That's the purpose of the program — to be there for that need," said Vic Todd, a senior state official. But California officials expressed ambivalence about a 6 percent rise in the cash welfare rolls in that state when it is facing a $40 billion deficit. "There's some fine tuning of the program that needs to occur, to incentivize work," said John Wagner, the state director of social services.

Among those sanguine about current caseload trends is Robert Rector, an analyst at the Heritage Foundation in Washington who is influential with conservative policy makers. He said the program had "reduced poverty beyond anyone's expectations" and efforts to dilute its rigor would only harm the poor.

"We need to continue with the principle that you give assistance willingly, but you require the individual to prepare for self-sufficiency," he said.

2nd Annual

High School Seniors
Career & Job Fair

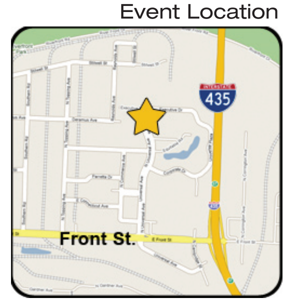
Feb. 27, 2009 8am - 2pm

Business & Technology Center (BTC)
1775 Universal Ave., Kansas City, MO 64120

FREE EVENT for employers and graduating seniors from 12 high schools and vocational schools from 6 area school districts: Center, Grandview, Hickman Mills, Independence, Lee's Summit and Raytown.

FREE LUNCH for employers provided by the Herndon Culinary Arts Program. Students will arrive by bus for morning and afternoon sessions. Employers confirmed to participate will be named in publicity for the event, including listing on **www.kclinc.org**

Event Location



Employers are encouraged to:

Bring information about your company
Distribute employment applications
Conduct interviews
Share career information

Employer Setup Time: 7 - 7:30 am (tables and chairs provided)

Interested employers contact:

Brenda Mitchelson 816-889-5050 jobfair@kclinc.org

More information at:

www.kclinc.org/jobfair

Herndon Career Center

LINC Local Investment Commission

THE CHAMBER
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

KCPT Presents

Foreclosed Revisited

Sunday, Feb. 22
5:30 and 10:30 p.m.

Underwritten by: LINC Local Investment Commission

KCPT-TV will air a special half-hour program on foreclosures on Sunday, Feb. 22 at 5:30 p.m. and rebroadcast at 10:30 p.m. The show *Foreclosed Revisited* will update a special that KCPT aired last September.

Face To Face Foreclosure Counseling

Bartle Hall
301 W. 13th St.
Kansas City, MO
Thurs., Feb. 26
2 - 8 p.m.

The Hope Now Alliance will hold a major event at Bartle Hall in Kansas City, Mo. Loan servicers will contact area homeowners who are delinquent on the their mortgages and provide an opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss options. Foreclosure counselors will also be available to help persons needing assistance.

NeighborWorks® Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City HOPENOW