



Testimony of
Joyce Campbell, Associate Executive Director for External Affairs
To the
Assembly Human Services Committee
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. Catholic Charities applauds Speaker Prieto's bold move to focus on fighting poverty in New Jersey. I am Joyce Campbell, Associate Executive Director at Catholic Charities, Diocese of Trenton but today I represent the five Catholic Charities agencies in the state. I am also Vice President of the Anti-Poverty Network of NJ.

Catholic Charities of New Jersey has provided services in the state for over 100 years. While part of a large national network of Catholic Charities, offering over 400 programs of service, our clients are welcomed in their communities. Our agencies are accredited and we utilize evidence-based practices, resulting in superb outcomes. Catholic Charities is known for serving the most difficult populations, and we remain committed to this. The best and most recent demonstration of our success has been the coordinated effort providing disaster case management services statewide.

Catholic Charities is no stranger to the fight against poverty; as the attorney for the poor for over a century we have witnessed successful policies and programs, as well as laws and programs that challenged those living in poverty. When a recession hits, we find that those who had been living in poverty are the first to feel the impact and the last to experience better times. In 2014 our five Catholic Charities agencies served over 280,000 people, however, given the need for multiple services throughout the year, the volume of activity is closer to three times that number. Across the agencies we have an average of 78% of our agency budgets funded by government sources, both Federal and State. The agencies have successfully raised over \$34,000,000 to support programs with little government funding and/or to supplement government funding. This is most true in our basic needs, anti-poverty programs.

Food pantries are stocked across the state with 40% USDA food and 60% of donated food and provide over 1.7 million meals. In 2014 a total of \$1.6 million in financial assistance was provided to prevent homelessness. We do receive Social Services to the Homeless, and FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter grant funds to help pay for rent, mortgage and utilities but they do not cover the cost of staffing or facilities. Our staff works to refer individuals and families to two very successful anti-poverty programs- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and State Rental Assistance Program or Section 8 Housing Choice Program. We know these programs work, but the ability to access these programs, among others, is often very difficult and time consuming without someone to provide guidance.

Case management has been identified as a critical service in assisting many populations- in disaster response, with the chronically homeless, with severely mentally or physically disabled and senior citizens. Many of the individuals and families who come to our doors across the state are “just plain poor” and are working to make ends meet every day, and may not fit into one of those populations.

The National Association of Social Workers defines case management as: “A process to plan, seek, advocate for, and monitor services from different social services or health care organizations and staff on behalf of a client. The process enables social workers in an organization, or in different organizations, to coordinate their efforts to serve a given client through professional teamwork, thus expanding the range of needed services offered. Case management limits problems arising from fragmentation of services, staff turnover, and inadequate coordination among providers.”

Just recently the Department of Human Services, Division on Family Development developed an Intensive Case Management program to work with individuals who are losing their extended housing assistance benefits. The efficacy of case management is clearly embraced within state government. So, then why are so few dollars spent on intensive case management in food pantries and homeless prevention organizations?

I had a unique learning experience six years ago working with a group of individuals from across the country that had been served by Catholic Charities programs. They were asked to identify the most helpful service they received in helping move them out of poverty. All agreed that “The one on one relationship with a case manager made a big difference. They advocated and negotiated with the system on my behalf.” So, while we do need additional supports in regards to food assistance and housing that is affordable, we still need to provide the connection between the person and the support. That’s where case management ensures the connection is made. Together, providing basic needs services and case management can reduce the trauma associated with hunger and homelessness. And, we all know prevention can save the State from spending funds on more expensive services...poverty is expensive when successful prevention strategies are overlooked.

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