



United Community Services of Johnson County

Written-Only *Neutral* Testimony Regarding House Bill 2627

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Date: January 31, 2024

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Chair Awerkamp and Members of the Committee on Welfare Reform:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **neutral testimony regarding House Bill 2627**, a bill intended to reorganize KSA 39-709, which sets out eligibility for the Kansas Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Assistance), Childcare Assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid programs.

United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) is a nonprofit agency that provides data analysis, leads collaborative planning, and mobilizes resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services in Johnson County and the surrounding region. UCS is committed to supporting policies, programs, and services that are invested in the success of our community’s most vital resource – its people.

While reorganization of KSA 39-709 may help clarify eligibility for legislators, UCS respectfully requests that this Committee also consider ways to streamline application and eligibility for the agencies that administer these programs as well as eligible Kansans. The eligibility level for benefits is too low in Kansas and the application process is arduous.

[According to United Way’s Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed \(ALICE\) model](#), 12% of Kansans live below the federal poverty level, which was \$24,860 for a household of 3 in 2023. An additional 27% of Kansans earn above the federal poverty level but not enough to afford the basics in the communities where they live. Altogether, 39% of **employed** Kansans aren’t making enough money to pay for basic necessities.

Yet, almost none of these Kansans will qualify for SNAP, Childcare Assistance, TANF, or Medicaid. For example, to receive TANF, a household can’t make more than 28% of the federal poverty level – about \$512/month for a family of 3 – and can’t have more than \$2,500 in assets. As a result, owning a vehicle, a necessity for employment in Kansas, can disqualify a household from receiving TANF. The maximum TANF benefit for that household is \$492/month with a lifetime limit of 24 months of support. Combining the maximum private income and TANF benefit results in a household of 3 having a *monthly* budget of \$1,002 or an annual income of \$12,048 – too low to afford rent on a one-bedroom apartment, much less electricity, food, clothing, or medical care.

[41 other states](#) have reduced administrative burdens for state agencies and residents eligible for safety net services like SNAP by adopting Broad-based Categorical Eligibility; the Committee could take up that administrative cost-savings measure at this time. Moreover, expanding eligibility could result in cost-savings. [A recent study published](#) in Journal of the American Medical Association found that every 5% increase in enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) could result in a 7.6% to 14.3% reduction in the number of children placed in foster care. UCS respectfully requests that this Committee use the opportunity for reorganization to reduce administrative burdens of these programs and increase eligibility for vulnerable Kansans.

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