

Date

Title, Name

Street

City, State, Zip

RE: Asset policies

Dear (insert name):

On behalf of (insert your organization name), I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about improving access to public benefits in our state. As you know, (insert section on your organization mission/interest in this issue).

The myriad income and asset limits and exemptions for means-tested programs are very confusing to applicants/recipients and caseworkers. The lack of simple and consistent rules imposes an enormous administrative burden and cost on (insert agency) at a time when it cannot afford to spend a lot of time requesting and checking a lot of paperwork from clients. Moreover, research and anecdotal information confirms that it is confusing to determine who is eligible for public benefit programs. This confusion leads to underutilization of needed work support programs and discourages saving and asset building that increase self-sufficiency and decrease reliance on public benefits.

To simplify the income and asset eligibility issues for (insert agency), clients, and other social service providers, and to encourage saving and asset building, (insert agency) should simplify and align asset rules across programs.

(insert state) has authority under federal TANF, Medicaid, SCHIP, and Food Stamp programs, to eliminate resource/asset rules for these means-tested programs. The best way to do this is through a combination of (insert agency) rule changes and development of a "categorical eligibility" plan under Food Stamps (which will require sign-off by Regional USDA).

States have authority to determine eligibility for TANF under federal block grants. States also have full flexibility to establish resource rules for Medicaid and SCHIP.

Expanding asset exemptions would be consistent with the goal of the recent Farm Bill to allow states greater flexibility in exempting assets from counting toward the food stamp asset limit. I would welcome a meeting with you to discuss what we can do together to change these policies and help millions in our state.

Name

Title

Organization

Contact information