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New U.S. Census Bureau Report Shows Kansas Poverty Rate Down DCF focus on poverty prevention proving successful

TOPEKA – Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Phyllis Gilmore is pleased to see that the U.S. Census Bureau's recent Supplemental Measure of Poverty report shows that Kansas poverty has declined and is below the national average.

"We are committed to helping Kansas families escape poverty through employment and self-sufficiency," Secretary Gilmore said. "Poverty prevention doesn't happen overnight, but it is great to see that we're moving in the right direction."

On Thursday, Oct. 16, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that the poverty rate from 2011 to 2013 in Kansas, dropped by 2.3 percent. The poverty rate in Kansas is 11.8 percent, compared to 15.9 percent nationally.

"The supplemental poverty measure is an important tool that helps policymakers and the public judge the effectiveness of social safety-net programs in a way that the official poverty measure cannot," Census Bureau Economist and report author Kathleen Short said. "It also helps us track how necessary expenses, such as paying taxes or work-related and medical-out-of-pocket expenses affect the well-being of all families."

The U.S. Census Bureau's official poverty measure was released last month. That report indicated that childhood poverty in Kansas was down .3 percent, from the previous year. Kansas was one of 26 states in which the supplemental rates were lower than the official statewide poverty rate. The supplemental poverty measure deducts various necessary expenses from income, including medical out-of-pocket expenses, income and payroll taxes, child care expenses and work-related expenses. These expenses

Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

reduce income available for purchasing essential basic goods, including food, clothing, shelter, utilities and more.

In 2011, DCF announced a series of welfare reforms designed to promote employment. Over the last several years, the agency has created important partnerships with other State departments and community groups to ensure that every person who is currently receiving welfare benefits and wants a job has a job.

“Employment is the key to moving out of poverty,” Secretary Gilmore said. “Instilling a strong work ethic, before a person even graduates from high school, is so important to ensuring that generational poverty does not continue.”

Some DCF whole or partially-funded, poverty-prevention programs include Kansas Early Head Start, Jobs for America’s Graduates, Kansas Reading Roadmap, Building Healthy Families, Vocational Rehabilitation’s Good for Business program for persons with disabilities, Economic and Employment Services’ partnership with the Kansas Department of Commerce’s Workforce Centers, Child Support Services’ 529 College Savings Initiative and domestic violence services that promote self-sufficiency.

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