



Advocate

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Governor Haslam's Budget Sets His Priorities for the State

Monday, Feb. 3, Governor Haslam gave his fourth [State of the State Address](#) and filed the budget for FY 2015. Most attention in the address and the media focused on Haslam's plan to use money from the lottery trust fund to provide free tuition for Tennessee high school graduates entering the state's two-year community colleges and colleges of applied technology. The "Tennessee Promise" program is part of the Governor's "Drive to 55" plan to increase the number of skilled workers in Tennessee.



The Governor praised the Department of Children's Services for being the first state child welfare program in the nation to make services available for all youth transitioning to adulthood from the custody of the Department of Children's Services. DCS also received a funding increase of more than \$6 million, including increased staffing for investigations, more family service workers, improved use of mobile technology, a rate increase for foster care, and adoption assistance, among other items.

Important home visiting programs, Healthy Start and CHAD, and Family Resource Centers were continued with non-recurring dollars. Funding was also included in the budget to avoid a proposed reduction in TennCare for the [Tennessee Regional Perinatal Centers](#) in Chattanooga, Johnson City, Knoxville, Memphis and Nashville. The Perinatal Centers provide assistance in preventing birth complications and diagnosing special needs and help babies access services to help them overcome their challenges.

Disability advocates were pleased that the budget included full funding for the Tennessee Family Support Program operated by the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services' Peer Support Centers. Funding for the centers, however, is non-recurring. The budget includes funding for a statewide recovery drug court.

Child advocates were disappointed the budget did not include funding for pre-K programs or a plan for Medicaid expansion, two programs with a proven contribution to student success. Advocates were also disappointed funding for additional Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs was not included.

The budget identified what the administration called "responsible reductions," including the elimination of 620 positions, 100 currently filled. The departments of Labor and Workforce Development, Human Services, Department of Children's Services and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities had the largest number of positions eliminated.

Video and [text](#) of the speech, [press release](#), and the [budget presentation](#) along with [Volumes I](#) and [II](#) of the budget are available at <http://www.tn.gov/stateofthestate/>.



The Governor's budget now must go through the legislative process, and legislative committees and full houses have an opportunity to amend it. Information about legislative hearings on the budget will be available in TCCY's Legislative Updates and by checking the legislature's calendars.

Senate Calendars <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Calendars/2014-2-10 CommS.c.%202-10-14.pdf>

House Committees <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Calendars/2014-2-10 CommH.pdf>

House Subs <http://www.capitol.tn.gov/Bills/108/Calendars/2014-2-10 SubcommH.pdf>

- AP, "10 things you should know about Haslam's \$32.6B budget": <http://bit.ly/111XHW0>
- DCS, "Open Line," Haslam recommends all current DCS Budget Requests": <http://bit.ly/1ngyG9u>

CBPP Ranks TN *Almost* Nation's Best in Budget Planning and Oversight

Tennessee state government has long had a reputation for sound money management. The latest rankings by the Center on Budget and Public Priorities (CBPP) rates Tennessee behind only Maryland in "[Budgeting for the Future.](#)" The group ranked Tennessee high in budget forecasting, current cost estimates and consensus revenue forecasting.

State employees, including those in child-serving agencies, should be reassured the state also rated high in funding and oversight of state pension funds.

Federal Budget Restores Some Cuts

The recently enacted federal budget also focuses on higher education and preparation for the jobs of the future. Funds were restored to workforce programs and programs helping low-income college students in the Omnibus Federal Budget for FY 2014. The budget, signed into law in January, added funding for innovative higher education institutions. The budget restored some funds cut through the earlier sequester process, following a framework negotiated by budget committees from both houses of Congress. Child-care and early-learning programs received \$1.4 billion in new funding. The budget also restored funding to the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, “the only federal program focused squarely on improving the health outcomes for women and children,” (Zero to Three) and to child welfare programs. More information is available from:

- Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), *A Look at the New Federal Spending Bill: How Does It Affect Key Programs for Low-Income Children, Youth, Families, and Individuals?* <http://bit.ly/1iwDMOa>
- Zero to Three, *Babies on the Omnibus*, January 2014 overview of the federal budget through the lens of funding for “good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences”: <http://bit.ly/LA20M2>.

Nutrition Funding. After a long delay, Congress also passed the Farm Bill. While the cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamps) are much smaller than those first proposed by the House of Representatives, \$8.6 billion will be cut over the next 10 years. Much of the cuts come to a program that linked food and utility assistance. Tennessee does not participate in this program. More information is available from:

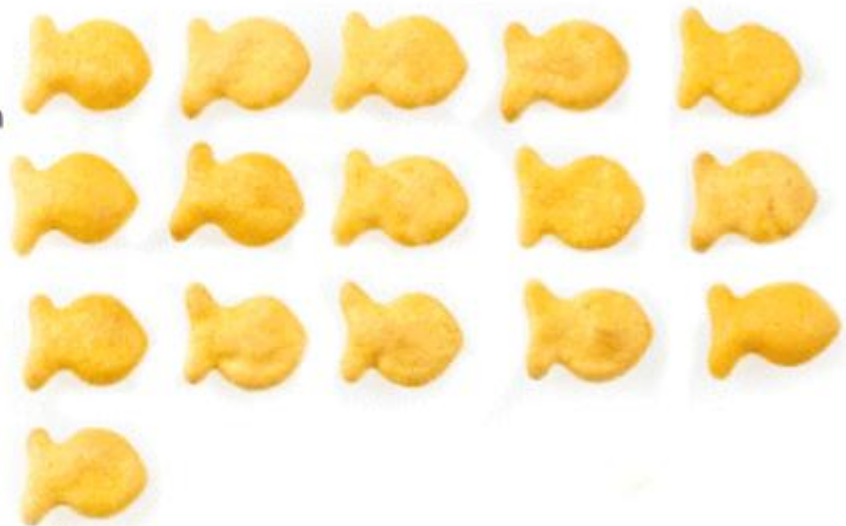
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Summary of the 2014 Farm Bill Nutrition Title:* <http://bit.ly/1azg8Rr>

U.S. Children Fed by SNAP Program, 2012

16 million

Americans who struggled with hunger in 2012 were children.

 = 1 million children



Source: Half in Ten Education Fund

ACA Act Provisions Extend TennCare Coverage for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

One of the first aspects of the Affordable Care Act implemented was the extension of family coverage to youth up to age 26. This January, the provision allowing youth aging out of foster care to continue to be covered until age 26 by Medicaid (TennCare in Tennessee) went into effect. Details about eligibility and application are available from TennCare at <http://bit.ly/LIWRBU>.

KIDS COUNT® Data Snapshot Examines Early Reading Proficiency in the United States

The KIDS COUNT analysis of 10 years of National Assessment of Educational Progress data reveal Tennessee fourth grade students' progress was greater than that of all but six other states and the District of Columbia during the decade from 2003 to 2013. However, Tennessee had the largest gap between the scores of low-income (students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches) and higher income (all other) students, meaning we have work to do. More information: <http://bit.ly/1gHqvFD>.

Useful Information

School House Rock, “I’m Just a Bill,” or how a bill becomes a law. (The general principles are the same for the state level, but the process for a budget may be more complicated than for a bill.): <http://bit.ly/1DzE45>.

Mark Your Calendar

Feb. 13-14, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth meeting, Andrew Jackson Building, Nashville. Contact Diane.Baham@tn.gov.

Feb. 14, Northeast Tennessee Council on Children and Youth Annual Breakfast for Our Legislators, Holiday Inn, Johnson City, 8 a.m. Cost for current members: \$9. Cost for new or renewing members: \$19. Register by contacting Diane.Wise@tn.gov by Feb. 11.

Feb. 24, Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth Legislative Update, Mental Health Cooperative, Room 109A, 12:30 p.m. Contact Susan.Cope@tn.gov by Feb. 21 to register. Space is limited.

Feb. 26, Tennessee Children’s Advocacy Centers “Stewards of Children” child abuse prevention training, Baptist Healing Trust, 2928 Sidco Drive, Nashville, 9 a.m.-11 a.m.. Contact llooser@tncac.org for more information.

Feb. 27, Council on Children’s Mental Health meeting, TennCare Building, 310 Great Circle Road, Nashville, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Contact Dustin Keller at Dustin.Keller@tn.gov.

Feb. 28, Northwest Council on Children and Youth Ethics Training with Alicia Donaldson, LCSW, and Dr. Daphne Henderson, LAPSW; University of Tennessee Martin. Contact Dana.Cobb@tn.gov.

March 11-12, Children’s Advocacy Days: “The Sport of Advocacy,” War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. Contact Richard.Kennedy@tn.gov. Register at <http://bit.ly/1eDZlCU>.

In the News

Support grows for pre-K programs (Tennessean editorial): (subscription may be required). <http://tnne.ws/1bni4HX>

Reading between the lines: Early learning, *Shelbyville Times-Gazette*: <http://bit.ly/1doPcyG>

Report: Tenn. has Nation's Worst Achievement Gap. WMOT Radio, Murfreesboro. <http://bit.ly/1c7Ui2l>

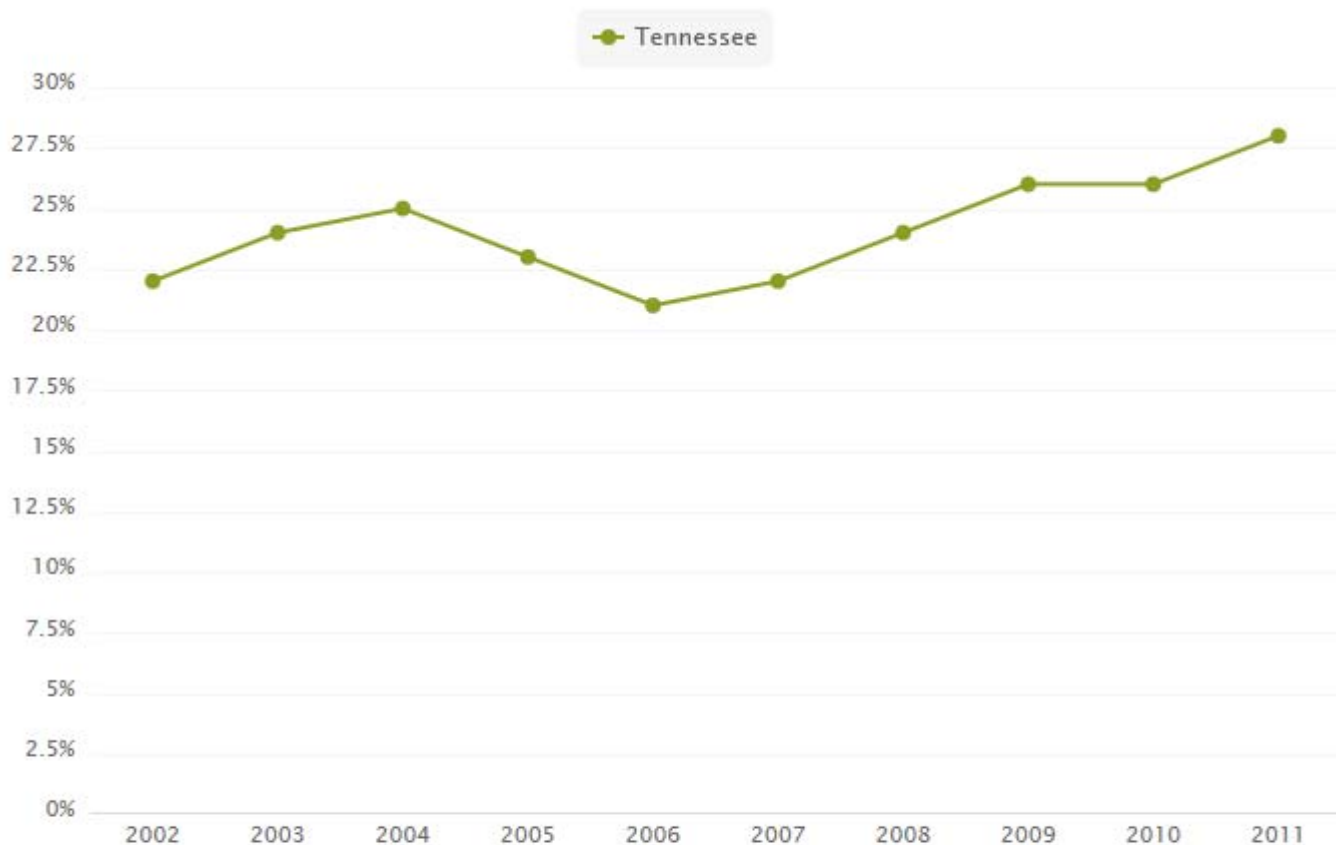
Guest column: Investing in kids today pays tomorrow, *Commercial Appeal*, Linda O'Neal (subscription may be required). <http://bit.ly/1kMiBjr>

Time crucial in screening newborns for disease: Tennessee's timing record unclear, *Times Free Press* (subscription may be required): <http://bit.ly/1c6ZxzG>

Research Information

The College and Career Readiness and Success Center at the American Institutes for Research released a roundup of *Predictors of Postsecondary Success* in November 2013: <http://bit.ly/1fSPDpc>.

Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts: Higher Education Completion



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES AGES 25 TO 29 WHO HAVE COMPLETED A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER (PERCENT)

National KIDS COUNT

KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org

A project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

More data on Tennessee child well-being is available at <http://bit.ly/15alkVu>.

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