



For Immediate Release

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**Kentucky One of Nine States Chosen for Initiative to Streamline
Work Supports for Low-Income Families**

Jeffersontown, KY – In a major effort to tap and foster state capital ingenuity, the Urban Institute has selected Kentucky as one of nine states to receive \$250,000 each in planning grants as part of a five-year initiative with lead funding from the Ford Foundation. Kentucky, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, and South Carolina were chosen for first-year grants to test innovative ways to streamline services for low-income working families.

Terry Brooks, Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, said, “Kentucky families won today. This effort is yet another step in the Beshear administration’s commitment to expanding access to Kentucky families around work support programs, such as KCHIP. This particular project has the potential to better serve Kentucky’s families and to increase the efficiency of state delivery systems at the same time. It can become very much a win for the bottom lines of Kentucky families, local communities and the state as a whole.”

States participating in the "[Work Support Strategies: Streamlining Access, Strengthening Families](#)" initiative will design and—if chosen next year for an implementation grant— experiment with new integrated approaches to delivering work supports to low-income families, including health coverage, nutrition benefits, and child care subsidies. Without such supports, low-income workers often drop out of the workforce to manage family, health, and other crises, leaving them stuck in poverty and unable to climb up the economic ladder.

Brooks observed, “In the difficult economic times of 2011, the high price of being poor continues to be a critical issue for the Commonwealth. Modernizing and integrating the state’s system of work support benefits is a pragmatic and common-sense innovation that will make a real difference in the health, the well-being and the pocketbooks of Kentucky’s hard-working families.”

The award from the Urban Institute will allow Kentucky to fully plan ways in which the state can make it easier for struggling individuals and families to receive multiple work support benefits. Ensuring that families have ease of access to multiple supports when they are facing a crisis allows work support benefits to work as intended - to stabilize an individual and their family while encouraging and supporting workforce participation. The ultimate objective is to support families toward greater self-sufficiency. The generous funding from the Ford Foundation with support from the Urban Institute and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities will position Kentucky to be at the forefront of new and modern efforts to support families.

For more information about the initiative see:

Urban Institute press release: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=901409&renderforprint=1>.

Project website: <http://www.urban.org/worksupport/>.

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***Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*