



Contact:

Kimberlee Charchan

Director of Communications

(810) 244-8044 x 306

Kcharchan@ccj-mi.org

Terri Stangl

Executive Director

989-295-4269

tstangl@ccj-mi.org

Grant will help Protect Genesee County Families Striving to Build Economic Security

Flint, Michigan – April 9, 2013 – Thousands of Genesee County Families need a helping hand when their world is turned upside down due to unemployment, illness, or the death of a family member.

Unfortunately, families that should be eligible for short term help with food, healthcare, utilities or other basic needs are often frustrated by changing and confusing rules or erroneous decisions. These families, and the community organizations that try to help them, will be able to get answers and help from the Center for Civil Justice, thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Flint. The CFGF has awarded the Center for Civil Justice a one year grant of \$20,000 from the Poverty Fund I to be used for the Family Economic Security Project in Genesee County. Under the FESP two attorneys at CCJ will help families and community agencies identify policies and practices that prevent eligible low-income families from getting the help they need to stabilize their income and circumstances. CCJ will help resolve immediate problems with safety net programs reported by local families and also work to prevent or correct systemic problems that may benefit the entire state.

In recent years, Michigan policymakers have been actively redesigning Michigan public assistance programs. These changes can sometimes have unintended and devastating consequences for vulnerable families with children, especially those affected by disability or limited literacy. Families become confused about program rules and requirements and about their rights and responsibilities. CCJ's Family Economic Security Project provides community agencies, families and other partners with accurate and timely information about the changes, technical assistance when problems arise, and helps clients navigate the ever-changing maze of state social service program rules. The project will use the real life experiences of families in Genesee County to come up with recommendations about what strategies help and what interferes with long term family economic self-sufficiency.

The Community Foundation of Greater Flint serves the common good in Genesee County – building a strong community by engaging people in philanthropy and developing the community’s permanent endowment – now and for generations to come.

The Center for Civil Justice (CCJ) advocates for people in Michigan who need help meeting their basic needs, by using legal expertise to monitor and improve public policy and access to governmental programs and services. Anyone who would like to learn more about the project or what services CCJ provides in Genesee County can call (810) 244-8044. CCJ’s website is www.ccj-mi.org.

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