



WEALTH Policy, Civic Engagement, and You! with Scott Anglemeyer, Kansas Association of Community Action Programs

*Excerpts from a series of CEP LIVE on Facebook events that highlight policies
impacting Kansas WEALTH and outline effective civic engagement strategies*

WATER – ENERGY – AIR – LAND – TRANSPORTATION – HEALTH = KANSAS WEALTH

OVERVIEW

Scott Anglemeyer of the Kansas Association of Community Action Programs joined the Climate + Energy Project on January 30, 2018, to discuss policy priorities for his organization during the 2018 legislative session. The Kansas Association of Community Action Programs (KACAP) is composed of eight organizations across the state that are dedicated to anti-poverty efforts.

HOW KACAP'S WORK ALIGNS WITH THE WEALTH PRIORITIES

- KACAP does a lot in the area of **health**; we would argue that health impacts poverty and that poverty impacts health. We know that low-income people tend to have a **lack of access to health care**, which sometimes drives people deeper into poverty. A lack of access to **transportation**, which keeps people from getting where they need to go, can be another contributing factor. Sometimes chronic conditions can drive people into poverty.
- Environmental aspects are something people don't think about when they think of poverty issues. But there is a lot of talk about **environmental justice**—that's the idea that low-income people tend to live, because of zoning laws and affordability, in places that are more impacted by environmental issues. Studies show that the higher incidence of lead in the bloodstream of children in low-income neighborhoods isn't necessarily from lead-based paints but lead in the environment—from [tracking in lead from the ground](#). If you live near an industrial area where there have been a lot of pollutants, that's a really significant issue. We also are watching the **impact of climate change upon poverty**. Some of the disasters that have happened this year, hurricanes and flooding, tend to disproportionately hit and impact low-income neighborhoods. For a lot of reasons, people with more resources are more capable of adapting to a changing environment and a changing climate than low-income people are.

TOP WEALTH POLICY ISSUES FOR KACAP

- One of the biggest areas that we are focused on is **health care and health coverage**, particularly everything that's happening with KanCare in the state. We are big proponents of **KanCare expansion**. The fact is, non-disabled adults in Kansas don't qualify for KanCare—the state's privatized Medicaid program—if they make more than 38% of the federal poverty level. Income levels under 50% are considered extreme poverty. People living in extreme poverty don't have access to that health care. They aren't going to be able to get private health care, even if some of the individuals are working—and many of them are. There are studies that show that something like 70% of the KanCare-eligible population are working, but they tend to be working in jobs that don't provide health care. We see KanCare expansion as really critical.



The Climate + Energy Project seeks to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America's Heartland through the ambitious deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in policy and practice.

Join the Conversation at climateandenergy.org, on Facebook & Twitter @CEPHeartland

- Related to that, there is a move by the state under the proposal called KanCare 2.0 to put additional **work requirements and time limits on KanCare** that would match the time limits that are already on the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, or TANF. We know that work requirements are supposed to encourage people to work, but the research shows that those time limits don't result in increased employment. Work requirements don't result in increased employment, and, in fact, it's actually driven more people into extreme poverty. We see that as a really important issue to stop, because we are going to drive more people into poverty and hurt more lives as a result of these additional work requirements and time limits.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY TIPS

- What public officials really want is **authenticity**. They want to hear from the individuals themselves; they embrace and go out of their way to encourage people to get involved. I think there is this fear people sometimes have, "Oh these are the people I see on TV or hear on the news or newspaper all of the time, and they are really important and I'm not important, so they don't want to hear from me." If you've ever been to a legislative hearing and you've seen what I call an average citizen go and testify, all of a sudden these legislators become more attentive and engaged. Legislators really want to hear from their constituents, so don't be afraid to speak up. Whether it's letters or emails or phone calls, any way that you engage is really effective.
- There is an attitude that low-income people have done something wrong or they are continuing to do something wrong, and usually it's personal shortcomings; they're lazy, they figured out how to game the system. I would ask, "Why do you view low-income people that way? Do you have experience with that, have you ever met anyone who is really in poverty and have you ever spent any time with them?" I would really encourage **policymakers to get engaged** with low-income people; it will change their minds. They are hard-working, incredibly creative people. You have to be creative to survive poverty.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Learn about and advocate for Water, Energy, Air, Land, Transportation, and Health (WEALTH) in Kansas with the Climate + Energy Project and other sponsor organizations at WEALTH Day on March 15th at the Kansas Statehouse.

- Get up-to-date on current environmental advocacy
- Visit the Solutions Showcase
- Participate in WEALTH Forums throughout the day
- Enjoy the Local Foods Luncheon
- Sample new ideas at the Cookies and Conservation Conversation
- Meet with your legislators

Connect with CEP on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and sign up for our [email updates](#).

Join us for WEALTH Day on March 15th at the Kansas Statehouse!

RSVP: <http://bit.ly.2018WEALTHDay>



The Climate + Energy Project seeks to dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in America's Heartland through the ambitious deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy, in policy and practice.

Join the Conversation at climateandenergy.org, on Facebook & Twitter @CEPHeartland