



State Takes Closer Look At Child Poverty

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(KCPW News) A new study is tracking intergenerational poverty in Utah for the first time, and this morning, state lawmakers heard some of the results at the Capitol. It's the result of a law sponsored by Senator Stuart Reid that directs the Utah Department of Workforce Services to gather data on intergenerational poverty and welfare in the state to develop plans and programs to end the cycle. Karen Crompton, President and CEO of Voices for Utah Children, says the face of poverty is not what it was 50 years ago.

"It's not old people, it's single women and children that make up the majority of people who live in poverty. There are things we can do to make a real difference, and we are very excited that Senator Reid wanted to get the information, and wanted to use the information to make policy decisions," she says.

One third of Utah adults currently receive public assistance, according to the data collected so far, while 30 percent of children who are born poor *stay* poor into their adult lives. Crompton says the study will help community leaders begin to understand intergenerational poverty in Utah, and what the best solutions and practices are to combat it.

"One of the best things that we can do to prevent intergenerational poverty is to be sure kids get off to a good start in school. That means they enter school ready to learn, that they are reading on grade level by the end of third grade, we know those are huge benchmarks. And we know that kids who start behind stay behind. We know what getting a high school degree means, and we know what getting a degree beyond high school means. So we think that's a really good place to start," she says.

A final report on the study will be released at the end of September. The Department of Workforce Services will hold a symposium October 9th to share the data collected with the community.