TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES
TANF

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families *(TANF)* is the primary support to help parents find work and alleviate the impact of poverty on families. TANF improves economic security by providing minimal cash assistance to families with children to ensure that parents can cover the costs of basic needs while they look for adequate and stable employment.

TANF IS A VITAL RESOURCE

In a state economy characterized by underemployment and low-wage work, too many families don't have the opportunity to meet their basic needs. *TANF* recipients are more likely to face barriers that make finding stable employment particularly difficult, such as: acute or chronic health issues, domestic violence, homelessness, and child care constraints. [1]

- **31%** of kids have parents that struggle to find stable and secure employment. [2]

- Nearly 1 in 5 kids *(19%)* live in poverty. [3]

- 1 in 5 kids *(20%)* in Washington live in households that struggle to put food on the table. [4]

- The number of homeless youth has *increased from 20,780 in 2008 to 32,494 in 2013*. [5]

WHO RECEIVES TANF ASSISTANCE?

67,340 KIDS [6]

42,564 FAMILIES [7]

12,091 HOMELESS TANF RECIPIENTS [8]

6,389 HOMELESS CHILDREN ON TANF (10% OF ALL KIDS WITH TANF) [8]

BENEFITS OF FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

1. REDUCES CHRONIC STRESS [9]

WHY DOES ECONOMIC SECURITY MATTERS FOR FAMILIES?
One in four kids in Washington state face economic hardship at least once during their childhood.[10] Taking steps to ensure economic well-being for kids and families reduces the chronic stress caused by these adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and can improve long-term outcomes for the entire family.

2. REDUCES PARENTS RISK' OF: [11]

Depression

Chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes

Family Instability

3. REDUCES KIDS' RISK OF: [12]

Low birth weight (which is linked to chronic disease later in life)

Behavioral and emotional problems

Poor working memory (which can affect learning and lead to poor economic outcomes later in life)
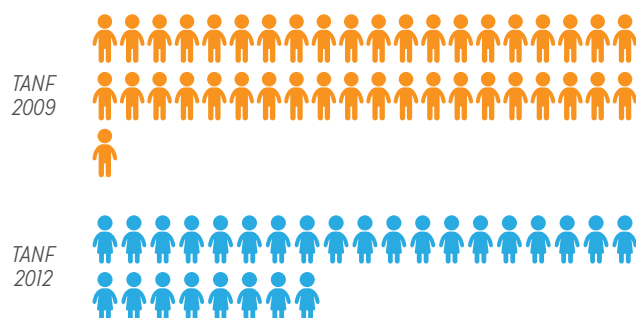
A STRONGER TANF EQUALS STRONGER FAMILIES

CUTS TO TANF HAVE HURT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The **TANF** cash grant, a lifeline for families with low incomes, has been cut by 15 percent since 2011. The TANF program has been severely weakened due to over $610 million in cuts since the start of the Great Recession, significantly impacting the program's ability to respond to the economic downturn.

○ **-$610M** in **TANF** cuts, child poverty **+18%** [13]

○ These cuts resulted in thousands of families losing assistance, demonstrating that the caseload decline is nothing to celebrate. [14]
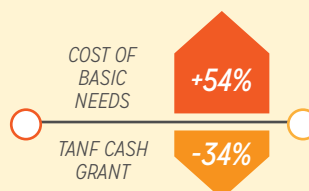
For every 100 children living in poverty, TANF covered 41 in 2009. By 2012, that number declined to just 28.

TANF 2009

TANF 2012

SOURCES:
1. Mancuso, David. "Adults on TANF in Washington State: Risks and Outcomes for Leavers, Cyclers, and Stayers." August 2010. 2. Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008 - 2013 American Community Survey. 3. B&PC analysis of 2013 ACS data. 4. Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Food Security Supplement. 5. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, "Homeless Students Data 2013-14." 6. Average number of children per month for fiscal year 2014, ESA Program Briefing Book 2014. 7. Average number of cases per month for fiscal year 2014, ESA Program Briefing Book 2014. 8. Economic Services Administration, "ESA Briefing Book, State Fiscal Year 2014." 9. Child Trends, "Adverse Childhood Experiences: National and State-Level Prevalence," July 2014. 10. Winer, Abby C., Thompson, Ross. "How Poverty and Depression Impacts a Child's Social and Emotional Competence." University of California-Davis, Center for Poverty Research. 11. "Health of Washington State: Social and Economic Determinants of Health." Washington State Department of Health. May 2013. 12. Child Trends, "CHILDREN IN POVERTY: TRENDS, CONSEQUENCES, AND POLICY OPTIONS," April 2009. 13. SPAN analysis of TANF spending reductions and underspend data since 2011. 14. B&PC analysis of TANF caseload data from the Economic Services Administration and 2008-2012 ACS data. 15. B&PC analysis of Washington State Self-Sufficiency Standard data from 2001 and 2014. Based on SSS for a one-parent household with one preschooler and one school-aged child. 16. B&PC analysis of TANF benefit level data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from 2001 to 2014, adjusted for inflation. 17. Floyd, Ife, Schott, Liz. "TANF Cash Benefits Continued to Lose Value in 2013." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. October 2013. Additional B&PC analysis of 2014 data based on "Out of Reach 2014," by the National Low-income Housing Coalition. TANF cash grant for 3 person family and Fair Market Rent for a two bedroom house, statewide average. 18. B&PC analysis of TANF benefit level data from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities from 2008. 19. Based on listening sessions conducted by Statewide Poverty Action Network.

TANF CAN BE STRENGTHENED

SHORT-TERM GOALS FOR TANF:

WE MUST RESTORE TANF by reinvesting savings from reduced participation in TANF right back into the program and restore funding to core elements, including cash assistance, job training and education, and child care. For example:

COST OF BASIC NEEDS **+54%**

TANF CASH GRANT **-34%**

For a family of three, the **cost of basic needs** has increased by 54 percent since 2001.[15] During that same time, the value of the TANF cash grant has eroded by 34 percent.[16]

HOUSING COVERAGE IN 2000 **83%**

HOUSING COVERAGE IN 2014 **49%**
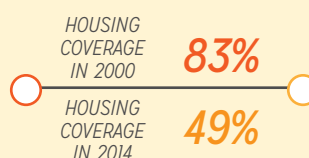
The TANF cash grant would have covered 83 percent of housing costs for a family of 3 in 2000; in 2014, the cash grant will only cover 49 percent.[17]

RESTORING THE CASH GRANT TO PRE-RECESSION LEVELS would put children and families on a path toward improved economic well-being. Before the recession, this three-person household would have received $562 in TANF cash assistance per month.[18] With cuts to the cash grant, they now receive $478, an $84 difference

WHAT DOES $84 A MONTH BUY YOU? [19]

1 month of diapers for a child

2 winter coats

2.5 Tanks of gas for work commuting

LONG-TERM GOALS FOR TANF:

WE MUST STRENGTHEN TANF through an integrated set of policies that maximize the opportunity for both children and parents to achieve long-term economic security. This means:

1. Increasing resources for the work supports, education, and training opportunities proven to support low-income parents' career pathways to self-sufficiency

2. Increasing investment in high-quality early learning opportunities to help children reach their full potential

3. Ensuring equity and dignity for all who are unemployed regardless of gender, social class, and personal circumstance.